

# HELEN JACKSON'S POEMS

(H.H.)



GUSTAV E. STECHERT  
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Poets 1800—

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# VERSES.

By H. H.,

AUTHOR OF "BITS OF TALK" AND "BITS OF TRAVEL."



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## DEDICATION.

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HEN children in the summer weather play,  
Flitting like birds through sun and wind and  
rain,

From road to field, from field to road again,  
Pathetic reckoning of each mile they stray  
They leave in flowers forgotten by the way ;  
Forgotten, dying, but not all in vain,  
Since, finding them, with tender smiles, half pain,  
Half joy, we sigh, " Some child passed here to-day."  
Dear one, — whose name I name not lest some tongue  
Pronounce it roughly, — like a little child  
Tired out at noon, I left my flowers among  
The wayside things. I know how thou hast smiled,  
And that the thought of them will always be  
One more sweet secret thing 'twixt thee and me.







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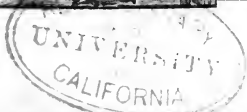
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## A CHRISTMAS SYMPHONY.

### I.



CHRISTMAS stars! your pregnant silent-  
ness,

Mute syllabled in rhythmic light,  
Leads on to-night,

And beckons, as three thousand years ago  
It beckoning led. We, simple shepherds, know  
Little we can confess,

Beyond that we are poor, and creep  
And wander with our sheep,

Who love and follow us. We hear,  
If we attend, a singing in the sky;

But feel no fear,  
Knowing that God is always nigh,  
And none pass by,  
Except His Sons, who cannot bring  
Tidings of evil, since they sing.

Wise men with gifts are hurrying,

In haste to seek the meaning of the Star,  
In search of worship which is new and far.

We are but humble, so we keep  
On through the night, contented with our  
sheep,

And with the stars. Between us and the east,  
No wall, no tree, no cloud, lifts bar.

We know the sunrise. Not one least  
Of all its tokens can escape

Our eyes that watch. But all days are  
As nights, and nights as days,  
In our still ways.

We have no dread of any shape  
Which darkness can assume or fill ;  
We are not weary ; we can wait ;  
God's hours are never late.

The wise men say they will return,  
Revealing unto us the things they learn.

Mayhap ! Meantime the Star stands still ;  
And, having that, we have the Sign.  
If we mistake, God is divine !

## II.

Oh, not alone because His name is Christ,  
Oh, not alone because Judea waits  
This man-child for her King, the Star stands still.  
Its glory reinstates,  
Beyond humiliation's utmost ill,  
On peerless throne, which she alone can fill,  
Each earthly woman. Motherhood is priced

Of God, at price no man may dare  
To lessen, or misunderstand.  
The motherhood which came  
To virgin sets in vestal flame,  
Fed by each new-born infant's hand,  
With Heaven's air,  
With Heaven's food,  
The crown of purest purity revealed,  
Virginity eternal signed and sealed  
Upon all motherhood !

## III.

Oh, not alone because His name is Christ,  
Oh, not alone because Judea waits  
This man-child for her King, the Star stands still.  
The Babe has mates.  
Childhood shall be forever on the earth ;  
And no man who has hurt or lightly priced  
So much as one sweet hair  
On one sweet infant's head,  
But shall be cursed ! Henceforth all things fulfil  
Protection to each sacred birth.  
No spot shall dare  
Refuse a shelter. Beasts shall tread  
More lightly ; and distress,  
And poverty, and loneliness,  
Yea, and all darkness, shall devise  
To shield each place wherein an infant lies.  
And wisdom shall come seeking it with gift,  
And worship it with myrrh and frankincense ;

And kings shall tremble if it lift  
Its hand against a throne.  
But mighty in its own  
Great feebleness, and safe in God's defence,  
No harm can touch it, and no death can kill,  
Without its Father's will !

## IV.

Oh, not alone because His name is Christ,  
Oh, not alone because Judea waits  
This man-child for her King, the Star stands still.  
The universe must utter, and fulfil  
The mighty voice which states,  
The mighty destiny which holds,  
Its key-note and its ultimate design.  
Waste places and the deserts must perceive  
That they are priced,  
No less than gardens in the Heart Divine.  
Sorrow her sorrowing must leave,  
And learn one sign  
With joy. And Loss and Gain  
Must be no more.  
And all things which have gone before,  
And all things which remain,  
And all of Life, and all of Death be slain  
In mighty birth, whose name  
Is called Redemption ! Praise !  
Praise to God ! 'The same  
To-day and yesterday, and in all days  
Forever ! Praise !

## V.

Oh, Christmas stars ! Your pregnant silentness,  
Mute syllabled in rhythmic light,  
Fills all the night.  
No doubt, on all your golden shores,  
Full music rings  
Of Happiness  
As sweet as ours.  
Midway in that great tideless stream which pours,  
And builds its shining road through trackless  
space,  
From you to us, and us to you, must be  
Some mystic place,  
Where all our voices meet, and melt  
Into this solemn silence which is felt,  
And sense of sound mysterious brings  
Where sound is not. This is God's secret. He  
Sits centred in his myriads of skies,  
Where seas of sound and seas of silence rise,  
And break together in one note and key,  
Divinely limitless in harmony !



## SPINNING.



LIKE a blind spinner in the sun,  
I tread my days ;  
I know that all the threads will run  
Appointed ways ;  
I know each day will bring its task,  
And, being blind, no more I ask.

I do not know the use or name  
Of that I spin ;  
I only know that some one came,  
And laid within  
My hand the thread, and said, " Since you  
Are blind, but one thing you can do."

Sometimes the threads so rough and fast  
And tangled fly,  
I know wild storms are sweeping past,  
And fear that I  
Shall fall ; but dare not try to find  
A safer place, since I am blind.

I know not why, but I am sure  
That tint and place,  
In some great fabric to endure  
Past time and race  
My threads will have ; so from the first,  
Though blind, I never felt accurst.



I think, perhaps, this trust has sprung  
    From one short word  
Said over me when I was young, —  
    So young, I heard  
It, knowing not that God's name signed  
My brow, and sealed me his, though blind.

But whether this be seal or sign  
    Within, without,  
It matters not. The bond divine  
    I never doubt.  
I know he set me here, and still,  
And glad, and blind, I wait His will ;

But listen, listen, day by day,  
    To hear their tread  
Who bear the finished web away,  
    And cut the thread,  
And bring God's message in the sun,  
"Thou poor blind spinner, work is done."



## MY LEGACY.



THEY told me I was heir, I turned in haste,  
And ran to seek my treasure,  
And wondered as I ran how it was placed,—  
If I should find a measure  
Of gold, or if the titles of fair lands  
And houses would be laid within my hands.

I journeyed many roads ; I knocked at gates ;  
I spoke to each wayfarer  
I met, and said, " A heritage awaits  
Me. Art not thou the bearer  
Of news ? Some message sent to me whereby  
I learn which way my new possessions lie ? "

Some asked me in ; naught lay beyond their door ;  
Some smiled and would not tarry,  
But said that men were just behind who bore  
More gold than I could carry ;  
And so the morn, the noon, the day were spent,  
While empty-handed up and down I went.

At last one cried, whose face I could not see,  
As through the mists he hasted ;  
" Poor child, what evil ones have hindered thee,  
Till this whole day is wasted ?  
Hath no man told thee that thou art joint heir  
With one named Christ, who waits the goods to  
share ? "

The one named Christ I sought for many days,  
In many places vainly ;  
I heard men name his name in many ways ;  
I saw his temples plainly ;  
But they who named him most gave me no sign  
To find him by, or prove the heirship mine.

And when at last I stood before his face,  
I knew him by no token  
Save subtle air of joy which filled the place ;  
Our greeting was not spoken ;  
In solemn silence I received my share,  
Kneeling before my brother and "joint heir."

My share ! No deed of house or spreading lands,  
As I had dreamed ; no measure  
Heaped up with gold ; my elder brother's hands  
Had never held such treasure.  
Foxes have holes, and birds in nests are fed :  
My brother had not where to lay his head.

My share ! The right like him to know all pain  
Which hearts are made for knowing ;  
The right to find in loss the surest gain ;  
To reap my joy from sowing  
In bitter tears ; the right with him to keep  
A watch by day and night with all who weep.

My share ! To-day men call it grief and death ;  
I see the joy and life to-morrow ;

I thank our Father with my every breath,  
 For this sweet legacy of sorrow ;  
 And through my tears I call to each, " Joint heir  
 With Christ, make haste to ask him for thy share."

### LOVE'S LARGEES.



T my heart's door  
 Love standeth, like a king beside  
 His royal treasury, whose wide  
 Gates open swing, and cannot hide  
 Their priceless store.

His touch and hold  
 Its common things to jewels turned ;  
 In his sweet fires the dross he burned  
 Away ; and thus he won and earned  
 And made its gold.

So rich I find  
 Myself in service of this king,  
 The goods we spare, in alms I fling ;  
 And breathless days too few hours bring  
 Me to be kind,

To souls whose pain  
 My heart can scarcely dare to greet  
 With pity, while my own complete

And blessed joy their loss must mete  
By my great gain.

Diviner air  
Of beauty, and a grace more free,  
More soft and solemn depths I see  
In every woman's face, since he  
Has called me fair.

More true and sure  
Each man's heart seems, more firm for right;  
Each man I hold more strong in fight,  
Since he stands ever in my sight,  
So brave, so pure.

More of sun's fire  
Than days can use, and more than nights  
Can name, of stars with rhythmic lights,  
And sweetest singing flocks, whose flights  
Can never tire, —

More bloom than eyes  
Can reach, or hands to grasp may dare, —  
More music in the constant air,  
Than each round wave can hold and bear,  
Before it dies, —

And more of life  
For living, than all death can kill,  
More good than evil's utmost will  
Can thwart, and peace to more than still  
The fiercest strife, —

All these I find  
 In service of this gracious king ;  
 From goods we spare, such alms I fling ;  
 And pray swift days more hours to bring,  
 More bonds to bind.

O happiness !  
 To utter thee, in vain our eyes  
 Seek tears ; and vainly all speech tries ;  
 This thing alone our king denies  
 In Love's largess.

### FOUND FROZEN.



HE died, as many travellers have died,  
 O'ertaken on an Alpine road by night ;  
 Numbed and bewildered by the falling snow,  
 Striving, in spite of failing pulse, and limbs  
 Which faltered and grew feeble at each step,  
 To toil up the icy steep, and bear  
 Patient and faithful to the last, the load  
 Which, in the sunny morn, seemed light !

And yet

'T was in the place she called her home, she died ;  
 And they who loved her with the all of love  
 Their wintry natures had to give, stood by  
 And wept some tears, and wrote above her grave  
 Some common record which they thought was true ;  
 But I, who loved her last and best, — / knew.

## MY DAYS



VEILED priestess, in a holy place,  
Day pauseth on her threshold, beckoning ;  
As infants to the mother's bosom spring  
At sound of mother's voice, although her  
face

Be hid, I leap with sudden joy. No trace  
Of fear I feel ; I take her hand and fling  
Her arm around my neck, and walk and cling  
Close to her side. She chooses road and pace ;  
I feast along the way on her shewbread ;  
I help an hour or two on her great task ;  
Beyond this honoring, no wage I ask.  
Then, ere I know, sweet night slips in her stead,  
And, while by sunset fires I rest and bask,  
Warm to her faithful breast she folds my head.

## THE ZONE OF CALMS.\*



AS yearning currents from the trackless snows,  
And silent Polar seas, unceasing sweep  
To South, to North, and linger not where  
leap

Red fires from glistening cones, — nor where the rose  
Has triumph on the snow-fed Paramos,

\* The Zone of Calms is the space comprised between the second degree north latitude and the second degree south.

In upper air, — nor yet where lifts the deep  
 Its silver Atolls on whose bosoms sleep  
 The purple sponges ; and, as in repose  
 Meeting at last, they sink upon the breast  
 Of that sweet tropic sea, whose spicy balms  
 And central heat have drawn them to its arms, —  
 So soul seeks soul, unsatisfied, repress,  
 Till in Love's tropic met, they sink to rest,  
 At peace forever, in the " Zone of Calms."

## MESSAGE.



OR one to bear my message, I looked out  
 In haste, at noon. The bee and swallow  
                   passed  
 Bound south. My message was to South.  
                   I cast

It trusting as a mariner. No doubt,  
 Sweet bee, blithe swallow, in my heart about  
 Your fellowship.

                  The stealthy night came fast.  
 "O chilly night," I said, "no friend thou hast  
 For me, and morn is far," when lo ! a shout  
 Of joy, and riding up as one rides late,  
 My friend fell on my neck just in the gate.  
 "You got my message then ?"

  " No message, sweet,  
 Save my own eyes' desire your eyes to meet."



"You saw no swallow and no bee before  
You came?"

"I do remember past my door  
There brushed a bird and bee. O, dearer presage  
Than I had dreamed! You sent by them a mes-  
sage?"

## MY LIGHTHOUSES.



T westward window of a palace gray,  
Which its own secret still so safely keeps  
That no man now its builder's name can  
say,

I lie and idly sun myself to-day,  
Dreaming awake far more than one who sleeps,  
Serenely glad, although my gladness weeps.

I look across the harbor's misty blue,  
And find and lose that magic shifting line  
Where sky one shade less blue meets sea, and  
through  
The air I catch one flush as if it knew  
Some secret of that meeting, which no sign  
Can show to eyes so far and dim as mine.

More ships than I can count build mast by mast  
Gay lattice-work with waving green and red  
Across my window-panes. The voyage past,

They crowd to anchorage so glad, so fast,  
Gliding like ghosts, with noiseless breath and tread,  
Mooring like ghosts, with noiseless iron and lead.

“ O ships and patient men who fare by sea,”  
I stretch my hands and vainly questioning cry,  
“ Sailed ye from west ? How many nights could ye  
Tell by the lights just where my dear and free  
And lovely land lay sleeping ? Passed ye by  
Some danger safe, because her fires were nigh ? ”

Ah me ! my selfish yearning thoughts forget  
How darkness but a hand's-breadth from the coast  
With danger in an evil league is set !  
Ah ! helpless ships and men more helpless yet,  
Who trust the land-lights' short and empty boast ;  
The lights ye bear aloft and prayers avail ye most.

But I — ah, patient men who fare by sea,  
Ye would but smile to hear this empty speech, —  
I have such beacon-lights to burn for me,  
In that dear west so lovely, new, and free,  
That evil league by day, by night, can teach  
No spell whose harm my little bark can reach.

No towers of stone uphold those beacon-lights ;  
No distance hides them, and no storm can shake ;  
In valleys they light up the darkest nights,  
They outshine sunny days on sunny heights ;  
They blaze from every house where sleep or wake  
My own who love me for my own poor sake.

Each thought they think of me lights road of flame  
 Across the seas ; no travel on it tires  
 My heart. I go if they but speak my name ;  
 From Heaven I should come and go the same,  
 And find this glow forestalling my desires.  
 My darlings, do you hear me ? Trim the fires !

GENOA, November 30.

## IN TIME OF FAMINE.



HE has no heart," they said, and turned  
 away,

Then, stung so that I wished my words  
 might be -

Two-edged swords, I answered low : —

“ Have ye

Not read how once when famine held fierce sway  
 In Lydia, and men died day by day  
 Of hunger, there were found brave souls whose glee  
 Scarce hid their pangs, who said, ‘ Now we  
 Can eat but once in two days ; we will play  
 Such games on those days when we eat no food  
 That we forget our pain.’

“ Thus they withstood

Long years of famine ; and to them we owe  
 The trumpets, pipes, and balls which mirth finds good

To-day, and little dreams that of such woe  
They first were born.

“ That woman’s life I know  
Has been all famine. Mock now if ye dare,  
To hear her brave sad laughter in the air.”

### THE PRINCE IS DEAD.



ROOM in the palace is shut. The king  
And the queen are sitting in black.  
All day weeping servants will run and  
bring,

But the heart of the queen will lack  
All things ; and the eyes of the king will swim  
With tears which must not be shed,  
But will make all the air float dark and dim,  
As he looks at each gold and silver toy,  
And thinks how it gladdened the royal boy,  
And dumbly writhes while the courtiers read  
How all the nations his sorrow heed.

The Prince is dead.

The hut has a door, but the hinge is weak,  
And to-day the wind blows it back ;  
There are two sitting there who do not speak ;  
They have begged a few rags of black.  
They are hard at work, though their eyes are wet  
With tears which must not be shed ;

They dare not look where the cradle is set ;  
 They hate the sunbeam which plays on the floor,  
 But will make the baby laugh out no more ;  
 They feel as if they were turning to stone,  
 They wish the neighbors would leave them alone.  
 The Prince is dead.

POPPIES ON THE WHEAT.



LONG Ancona's hills the shimmering heat,  
 A tropic tide of air with ebb and flow  
 Bathes all the fields of wheat until they  
 glow

Like flashing seas of green, which toss and beat  
 Around the vines. The poppies lithe and fleet  
 Seem running, fiery torchmen, to and fro  
 To mark the shore.

The farmer does not know  
 That they are there. He walks with heavy feet,  
 Counting the bread and wine by autumn's gain,  
 But I, — I smile to think that days remain  
 Perhaps to me in which, though bread be sweet  
 No more, and red wine warm my blood in vain,  
 I shall be glad remembering how the fleet,  
 Lithe poppies ran like torchmen with the wheat.

## A FUNERAL MARCH.

## I.



ES, all is ready now ; the door and gate  
 Have opened this last time for him, more  
     wide  
 Than is their wont ; no longer side by side  
 With us, he passes out ; we follow, meek,  
 And weeping at his pomp, which is not pride,  
 And which he did not seek.  
 We cannot speak,  
 Because we loved him so ; we hesitate,  
 And cling and linger and in vain belate  
 Their feet who bear him.  
     Slow, slow, slow,  
 With every fibre holding back, we go ;  
 And cruel hands, while we are near,  
 And weep afresh to hear,  
 Have shut the door and shut the gate.

## II.

The air is full of shapes  
     We do not see, but feel ;  
 Ghosts which no death escapes.  
     No sepulchre can seal ;  
 Ghosts of forgotten things of joy and grief ;  
 And ghosts of things which never were,  
 But promised him to be : they may defer  
 Their pledges now ; his unbelief

Is justified. Oh, why did they abide  
This time, these restless ghosts, which glide,  
Accompanying him? Can they go in  
Unquestioned, and confront him in the grave,  
And answers win  
From dead lips which the live lips never gave?  
Will they return across the churchyard gate  
With us, weeping with us, "Too late! too late!"  
Or are they dead, as he is dead?  
And when the burial rites are said,  
Will they lie down, the resurrection to await?

## III.

With dumb, pathetic look the poor beasts go  
At unaccustomed pace to suit our woe;  
Uncomprehending equally  
Or what a grief or what a joy may be.  
House after house where life makes glad  
We bear him past, who all of life has had.  
And men's and women's wistful eyes  
Look out on us in sorrow and surprise,  
For all men are of kin to one who dies.

## IV.

Eager the light grass bends  
To let us pass, but springs again and waves  
To hide our footsteps; not a flower saves  
Its blossoming, or sends  
One odor less, as we go by;

And never seemed the shining sky  
So full of birds and songs before.  
Whole tribes of yellow butterflies  
Dart mockingly and wheel and soar,  
Making it only seem the more  
Impossible, this human death which lies  
Silent beneath their dance who live  
One day and die. Noiseless and swift,  
Winged seeds come through the air, and drift  
Down on the dead man's breast.  
They shall go with him into rest,  
And in the resurrection of the Spring  
To his low grave shall give  
The beauty of some green and flowering thing.

## v.

The glittering sun moves slowly overhead,  
It seems in rhythmic motion with our tread,  
Confronting us with its relentless, hot,  
Unswerving, blinding ray ;  
Then, sparing not  
One subtle torture, it makes haste to lay  
A ghastly shadow all along the way  
Of formless, soundless wheel and lifeless plume,  
All empty shapes in semblance of our gloom,  
Creeping along at our slow pace,  
Not for one moment nor in any place  
Forsaking us, nor ceasing to repeat  
In taunting lines the faltering of our feet ;  
Laying, lifting, in a mocking breath,  
Mocking shadows of the shadow of Death.



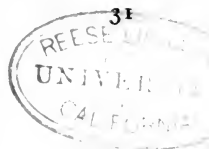
*A FUNERAL MARCH.*

VI.

But now comes silent joy, anointing  
With sudden, firm, and tender hand  
Our eyes ; anointed with this clay  
Of burial earth, we see how stand  
Around us, marshalled under God's appointing,  
Such shining ones as on no other day  
Descend. We see, with a majestic face,  
Of love ineffable, One walking in chief place  
Beside the dead, — High Priest  
Of his salvation, King  
Of his surrender, comrade till life ceased,  
Saviour from suffering, —  
O sweet, strong, loving Death !  
With yearning, pitying breath,  
He looks back from his dead to us, and saith,  
“ O mine who love me not, what filled  
Your hearts with this strange fear ?  
Could ye but hear  
The new voice of this man whom I have willed  
To set so free, to make  
Him subject in my kingdom, for the sake  
Of being greater king than I,  
Reigning with Christ eternally ! ”

VII.

Closer and closer press the shining ones ;  
Clearer and clearer grow the notes  
Of music from the heavenly throats.  
We see the gleaming of the precious stones



Which set the Gate of Life. King's sons  
Throng out to meet the man we bring ;  
We hear his voice in entering :

“ Oh ! see how all these weep

Who come with me !

Must they return ?

Oh ! send swift messenger to Christ, and see  
If He will bid you keep  
Them too ! ”

Scarce we discern  
From distant Heaven where Christ sits and hears,  
The tender whispered voice, in which he saith,  
“ My faithful servant, Death, is Lord of death :  
My days must be a thousand years.”

#### VIII.

The Gate of Life swings close. All have gone in ;  
Majestic Death, his freedman following ;  
And all those ghostly shapes, the next of kin,  
Their deeds, which were and were not, rendering ;  
And tender Joy and Grief,  
Bearing in one pale sheaf  
Their harvest ; and the shining ones who come  
And go continually.  
Alone and silently,  
We take the road again that leads us home.  
The mother has no more a son ;  
The wife no husband ; and the child  
No father. Yet around the woman's days  
Immortal loverhood lights blaze

Of deathless fires ; and never mother smiled  
 Like her who smiles forever, seeing one  
 Immortal child, for whom immortal fatherhood  
 Beseeches and receives eternal good.  
 And days that were not full are filled ;  
     And with triumphant breath,  
     Mighty to cheer and save,  
 The voices ring which once were stilled,  
 The pulses beat which once were chilled,  
     “ Life is the victory of the grave,  
     Christ is Lord of the Lord of Death ! ”

## JOY.



JOY, hast thou a shape ?  
 Hast thou a breath ?  
 How fillest thou the soundless air ?  
 Tell me the pillars of thy house !  
 What rest they on ? Do they escape  
     The victory of Death ?  
 And are they fair  
     Eternally, who enter in thy house ?  
 O Joy, thou viewless spirit, canst thou dare  
     To tell the pillars of thy house ?


On adamant of pain,  
     Before the earth  
 Was born of sea, before the sea,  
 Yea, and before the light, my house

Was built. None know what loss, what gain,  
Attends each travail birth.

No soul could be

At peace when it had entered in my house,  
If the foundations it could touch or see,  
Which stay the pillars of my house!

## TWO TRUTHS.

“ARLING,” he said, “I never meant  
To hurt you;” and his eyes were wet.  
“I would not hurt you for the world :  
Am I to blame if I forget?”

“Forgive my selfish tears!” she cried,  
“Forgive! I knew that it was not  
Because you meant to hurt me, sweet,—  
I knew it was that you forgot!”

But all the same, deep in her heart  
Rankled this thought, and rankles yet,—  
“When love is at its best, one loves  
So much that he cannot forget.”

## GONDOLIEDS.

## I.

## YESTERDAY.



EAR yesterday, glide not so fast;  
 O, let me cling  
 To thy white garments floating past;  
 Even to shadows which they cast  
 I cling, I cling.  
 Show me thy face  
 Just once, once more ; a single night  
 Cannot have brought a loss, a blight  
 Upon its grace.

Nor are they dead whom thou dost bear,  
 Robed for the grave.  
 See what a smile their red lips wear ;  
 To lay them living wilt thou dare  
 Into a grave ?  
 I know, I know,  
 I left thee first ; now I repent ;  
 I listen now ; I never meant  
 To have thee go.

Just once, once more, tell me the word  
 Thou hadst for me !  
 Alas ! although my heart was stirred,  
 I never fully knew or heard  
 It was for me.  
 O yesterday,

My yesterday, thy sorest pain,  
Were joy couldst thou but come again, —  
Sweet yesterday.

• VENICE, May 26.

## II.

## TO-MORROW.

ALL red with joy the waiting west,  
O little swallow,  
Couldst thou tell me which road is best?  
Cleaving high air with thy soft breast  
For keel, O swallow,  
Thou must o'erlook  
My seas and know if I mistake ;  
I would not the same harbor make  
Which yesterday forsook.

I hear the swift blades dip and splash  
Of unseen rowers ;  
On unknown land the waters dash ;  
Who knows how it be wise or rash  
To meet the rowers !  
Premì ! Premì !  
Venetia's boatmen lean and cry ;  
With voiceless lips, I drift and lie  
Upon the twilight sea.

The swallow sleeps. Her last low call  
Had sound of warning.

Sweet little one, whate'er befall,  
 Thou wilt not know that it was all,  
     In vain thy warning.  
     I may not borrow  
 A hope, a help. I close my eyes ;  
 Cold wind blows from the Bridge of Sighs ;  
 Kneeling I wait to-morrow.

VENICE, May 30.

"SPOKEN."



COUNTING the hours by bells and lights  
     We rose and sank ;  
 The waves on royal banquet-heights  
     Tossed off and drank  
 Their jewels made of sun and moon,  
 White pearls at midnight, gold at noon.

Counting the hours by bells and lights,  
     We sailed and sailed ;  
 Six lonely days, six lonely nights,  
     No ship we hailed.  
 Till all the sea seemed bound in spell,  
 And silence sounded like a knell.

At last, just when by bells and lights  
     Of seventh day  
 The dawn grew clear, in sudden flights  
     White sails away

To east, like birds, went spreading slow  
Their wings which reddened in the glow.

No more we count the bells and lights ;  
    We laugh for joy.  
The trumpets with their brazen might  
    Call, " Ship ahoy ! "  
We hold each other's hands ; our cheeks  
Are wet with tears ; but no one speaks.

In instant comes the sun and lights  
    The ship with fire ;  
Each mast creeps up to dizzy heights,  
    A blazing spire ;  
One faint " Ahoy," then all in vain  
We look ; we are alone again.

I have forgotten bells and lights,  
    And waves which drank  
Their jewels up ; those days and nights  
    Which rose and sank  
Have turned like other pasts, and fled,  
And carried with them all their dead.

But every day that fire ship lights  
    My distant blue,  
And every day glad wonder smites  
    My heart anew,  
How in that instant each could heed  
And hear the other's swift God-speed.



Counting by hours thy days and nights  
In weariness,  
O patient soul, on godlike heights  
Of loneliness,  
I passed thee by ; tears filled our eyes ;  
The loud winds mocked and drowned our cries.

The hours go by, with bells and lights ;  
We sail, we drift ;  
Our souls in changing tasks and rites,  
Find work and shift.  
But this I pray, and praying know  
Till faith almost to joy can grow

That hour by hour the bells, the lights  
Of sound of flame  
Weave spell which ceaselessly recites  
To thee a name,  
And smiles which thou canst not forget  
For thee are suns which never set.

## THE WAY TO SING.



HE birds must know. Who wisely sings  
Will sing as they ;  
The common air has generous wings  
Songs make their way.

No messenger to run before,  
Devising plan ;  
No mention of the place or hour  
To any man ;  
No waiting till some sound betrays  
A listening ear ;  
No different voice, no new delays,  
If steps draw near.

“What bird is that? Its song is good.”  
And eager eyes  
Go peering through the dusky wood,  
In glad surprise.  
Then late at night, when by his fire  
The traveller sits,  
Watching the flame grow brighter, higher,  
The sweet song flits  
By snatches through his weary brain  
To help him rest ;  
When next he goes that road again,  
An empty nest  
On leafless bough will make him sigh,  
“Ah me ! last spring  
Just here I heard, in passing by,  
That rare bird sing !”

But while he sighs, remembering  
How sweet the song,  
The little bird on tireless wing,  
Is borne along

In other air, and other men  
    With weary feet,  
On other roads, the simple strain  
    Are finding sweet.  
The birds must know. Who wisely sings  
    Will sing as they ;  
The common air has generous wings,  
    Songs make their way.

THE TRUE BALLAD OF THE KING'S  
SINGER.



HE king rode fast, the king rode well,  
    The royal hunt went loud and gay,  
A thousand bleeding chamois fell  
    For royal sport that day.

When sunset turned the hills all red,  
    The royal hunt went still and slow ;  
The king's great horse with weary tread  
    Plunged ankle-deep in snow.

Sudden a strain of music sweet,  
    Unearthly sweet, came through the wood ;  
Up sprang the king, and on both feet  
    Straight in his saddle stood.

“ Now, by our lady, be it bird,  
Or be it man or elf who plays,  
Never before my ears have heard  
A music fit for praise ! ”

Sullen and tired, the royal hunt  
Followed the king, who tracked the song,  
Unthinking, as is royal wont,  
How hard the way and long.

Stretched on a rock the shepherd lay  
And dreamed and piped, and dreamed and sang,  
And careless heard the shout and bay  
With which the echoes rang.

“ Up, man ! the king ! ” the hunters cried.  
He slowly stood, and, wondering,  
Turned honest eyes from side to side :  
To him, each looked like king.

Strange shyness seized the king's bold tongue ;  
He saw how easy to displease  
This savage man who stood among  
His courtiers, so at ease.

But kings have silver speech to use  
When on their pleasure they are bent ;  
The simple shepherd could not choose ;  
Like one in dream he went.

O hear ! O hear ! The ringing sound  
Of twenty trumpets swept the street,

The king a minstrel now has found,  
For royal music meet.

With cloth of gold, and cloth of red,  
And woman's eyes the place is bright.  
"Now, shepherd, sing," the king has said,  
"The song you sang last night!"

One faint sound stirs the perfumed air,  
The courtiers scornfully look down;  
The shepherd kneels in dumb despair,  
Seeing the king's dark frown.

The king is just; the king will wait.  
"Ho, guards! let him be gently led,  
Let him grow used to royal state, —  
To being housed and fed."

All night the king unquiet lay,  
Racked by his dream's presentiment;  
Then rose in haste at break of day,  
And for the shepherd sent.

"Ho now, thou beast, thou savage man,  
How sound thou sleepest, not to hear!"  
They jeering laughed, but soon began  
To louder call in fear.

They wrenched the bolts; unrumped stood  
The princely bed all silken fine,  
Untouched the plates of royal food,  
The flask of royal wine!

The costly robes strewn on the floor,  
The chamber empty, ghastly still ;  
The guards stood trembling at the door,  
And dared not cross the sill.

All night the sentinels their round  
Had kept. No man could pass that way.  
The window dizzy high from ground ;  
Below, the deep moat lay.

They crossed themselves. "The foul fiend lurks  
In this," they said. They did not know  
The miracles sweet Freedom works,  
To let her children go.

It was the fiend himself who took  
That shepherd's shape to pipe and sing ;  
And every man with terror shook,  
For who would tell the king !

The heads of men all innocent  
Rolled in the dust that day ;  
And east and west the bloodhounds went,  
Baying their dreadful bay ;

Safe on a snow too far, too high,  
For scent of dogs or feet of men,  
The shepherd watched the clouds sail by,  
And dreamed and sang again ;

And crossed himself, and knelt and cried,  
And kissed the holy Edelweiss,

Believing that the fiends had tried  
To buy him with a price.

The king rides fast, the king rides well;  
The summer hunts go loud and gay;  
The courtiers, who this tale can tell,  
Are getting old and gray.

But still they say it was a fiend  
That took a shepherd's shape to sing,  
For still the king's heart is not weaned  
To care for other thing.

Great minstrels come from far and near,  
He will not let them sing or play,  
But waits and listens still to hear  
The song he heard that day.

ÆNONE.



WOE to thee, Ænone ! stricken blind  
And poisoned by a darkness and a pain,  
O, woe to thee, Ænone ! who couldst find  
No love when love lay dying, doubly slain  
Slain thus by thee, Ænone !

O, what stain,  
Of red like this on hands of love was seen  
Ever before or since, since love has been !

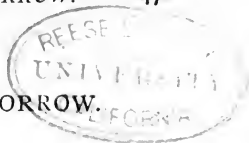
O, woe to thee, CEnone ! Hadst thou said,  
“ Sweet love, lost love, I know now why I live  
And could not die, the days I wished me dead ;  
O love, all strength of life and joy I give  
Thee back ! Ah me, that I have dared to strive  
With fates that bore me to this one sure bliss,  
Thou couldst not rob me, O lost love, of this ? ” —

Hadst thou said this, CEnone, though he went  
Bounding with life, thy life, and left thee there  
Dying and glad, such sudden pain had rent  
His heart, that even beating in the fair  
White arms of Helen, hid in her sweet hair,  
It had made always moan, in strange unrest,  
“ CEnone’s love was greater love, was best.”

[“ Paris, the son of Priam, was wounded by one of the poisoned arrows of Hercules that Philoctetes bore to the siege of Troy, whereupon he had himself borne up into Ida, that he might see the nymph CEnone, whom he once had loved, because she who knew many secret things alone could heal him ; but when he had seen her and spoken with her, she would deal with the matter in no wise, whereupon Paris died of that hurt.”]







## THE LONELINESS OF SORROW.



RIENDS crowd around and take it by the hand,

Intruding gently on its loneliness,

Striving with word of love and sweet caress

To draw it into light and air. Like band

Of brothers, all men gather close, and stand

About it, making half its grief their own,

Leaving it never silent nor alone.

But through all crowds of strangers and of friends,

Among all voices of good-will and cheer,

Walks Sorrow, silently, and does not hear.

Like hermit whom mere loneliness defends ;

Like one born deaf, to whose still ear sound sends

No word of message ; and like one born dumb,

From whose sealed lips complaint can never come.

Majestic in its patience, and more sweet

Than all things else that can of souls have birth,

Bearing the one redemption of this earth

Which God's eternities fulfil, complete,

Down to its grave, with steadfast, tireless feet

It goes uncomforted, serene, alone,

And leaves not even name on any stone.

## A SUNRISE.



He slept on a bed of roses,  
I know —  
I, who am least of his subjects. The  
thing  
Chanced thus.

Before it was time for the king  
To rise — just before — I saw a red glow  
Stream out of his door, such as roses show  
At heart, such a glow as no fire could bring.  
The solid gold of the whole eastern wing  
Of the palace seemed pale.

Then, floating low  
Across the threshold, great petals of pink  
Fell from the feet of the king, as he stood  
There, smiling, majestic, serene, and good.  
But was it a bed of roses?

I think  
Of another monarch who, on the brink  
Of death by fire, smiled, as a monarch should.



A BALLAD OF THE GOLD COUNTRY.



DEEP in the hill the gold sand burned ;  
The brook ran yellow with its gleams ;  
Close by, the seekers slept, and turned  
And tossed in restless dreams.

At dawn they waked. In friendly cheer  
Their dreams they told, by one, by one ;  
And each man laughed the dreams to hear,  
But sighed when they were done.

Visions of golden birds that flew,  
Of golden cloth piled fold on fold,  
Of rain which shone, and filtered through  
The air in showers of gold ;

Visions of golden bells that rang,  
Of golden chariots that rolled,  
Visions of girls that danced and sang,  
With hair and robes of gold ;

Visions of golden stairs that led  
Down golden shafts of depths untold,  
Visions of golden skies that shed  
Gold light on seas of gold.

“Comrades, your dreams have many shapes,”  
Said one who, thoughtful, sat apart :  
“But I six nights have dreamed of grapes,  
One dream which fills my heart.

“A woman meets me, crowned with vine ;  
Great purple clusters fill her hands ;  
Her eyes divinely smile and shine,  
As beckoning she stands.

“I follow her a single pace ;  
She vanishes, like light or sound,  
And leaves me in a vine-walled place,  
Where grapes pile all the ground.”

The comrades laughed : “We know thee by  
This fevered, drunken dream of thine.”  
“Ha, ha,” cried he, “never have I  
So much as tasted wine !

“Now, follow ye your luring shapes  
Of gold that clinks and gold that shines ;  
I shall await my maid of grapes,  
And plant her trees and vines.”

All through the hills the gold sand burned ;  
All through the lands ran yellow streams ;  
To right, to left, the seekers turned,  
Led by the golden gleams.

The ruddy hills were gulfed and strained ;  
The rocky fields were torn and trenched ;  
The yellow streams were drained and drained,  
Until their sources quenched.

The gold came fast ; the gold came free :  
The seekers shouted as they ran,  
“ Now let us turn aside, and see  
How fares that husbandman ! ”

“ Ho here ! ho there ! good man,” they cried,  
And tossed gold nuggets at his feet ;  
“ Serve us with wine ! Where is thy bride  
That told thee tales so sweet ? ”

“ No wine as yet, my friends, to sell ;  
No bride to show,” he smiling said :  
“ But here is water from my well ;  
And here is wheaten bread.”

“ Is this thy tale ? ” they jeering cried ;  
“ Who was it followed luring shapes ?  
And who has won ? It seems she lied,  
Thy maid of purple grapes ! ”

“ When years have counted up to ten,”  
He answered gayly, smiling still,  
“ Come back once more, my merry men,  
And you shall have your fill

“Of purple grapes and sparkling wine,  
 And figs, and nectarines like flames,  
 And sweeter eyes than maids’ shall shine  
 In welcome at your names.”

In scorn they heard ; to scorn they laughed  
 The water and the wheaten bread ;  
 “We’ll wait until a better draught  
 For thy bride’s health,” they said.

. . . . .

The years ran fast. The seekers went  
 All up, all down the golden lands :  
 The streams grew pale ; the hills were spent ;  
 Slow ran the golden sands.

And men were beggars in a day,  
 For swift to come was swift to go ;  
 What chance had got, chance flung away  
 On one more chance’s throw.

And bleached and seamed and riven plains,  
 And tossed and tortured rocks like ghosts,  
 And blackened lines and charred remains,  
 And crumbling chimney-posts,

For leagues their ghastly records spread  
 Of youth, and years, and fortunes gone,  
 Like graveyards whose sad living dead  
 Had hopeless journeyed on.

. . . . .

The years had counted up to ten :

One night, as it grew chill and late,  
The husbandman marked beggar-men  
Who leaned upon his gate.

“Ho here ! good men,” he eager cried,  
Before the wayfarers could speak ;  
“This is my vineyard. Far and wide,  
For laborers I seek.

“This year has doubled on last year ;  
The fruit breaks down my vines and trees ;  
Tarry and help, till wine runs clear,  
And ask what price you please.”

Purple and red, to left, to right,  
For miles the gorgeous vintage blazed ;  
And all day long and into night  
The vintage song was raised.

And wine ran free all thirst beyond,  
And no hand stinted bread or meat ;  
And maids were gay, and men were fond,  
And hours were swift and sweet.

The beggar-men they worked with will ;  
Their hands were thin and lithe and strong :  
Each day they ate good two days' fill,  
They had been starved so long.

The vintage drew to end. New wine  
From thousand casks was dripping slow,  
And bare and yellow fields gave sign  
For vintagers to go.

The beggar-men received their pay,  
Bright yellow gold, — twice their demand ;  
The master, as they turned away,  
Held out his brawny hand,

And said : “ Good men, this time next year  
My vintage will be bigger still ;  
Come back, if chance should bring you near,  
And it should suit your will.”

The beggars nodded. But at night  
They said : “ No more we go that way :  
He did not know us then ; he might  
Upon another day ! ”





## EXILE.



EN may be banished, and a blood-price  
set,  
Tracking their helpless steps in every  
land,

Arming against their life each base man's hand,  
But light and air and memory are met  
In holy league, to help and save them yet,  
From all of death which souls cannot withstand:  
The subtlest cruelty which ever planned,  
Can never make them pray they may forget  
Because they are forgotten.

They may go,  
Driven of earth and tossed by salt sea's foam,  
Till every breath one slow dull pain become;  
It is not exile. Only exiles know: .  
Nor distance makes, nor nearness saves the blow;  
The exile had of exile died at home.

## MY SHIP.



Y brothers' ships sail out by night, by day;  
My brothers' feet run merry on the shore,  
They need not weep, believing they no  
more

Shall find the loved ones who have sailed away,

So frequent go their ships, to-morrow may  
See one return for them.

The ship that bore  
My loved from me lies where she lay before ;  
My heart grows sick within me as I pray  
The silent skipper, morn by morn, if he  
Will sail before the night.

With patient tread  
I bear him all my goods. I cannot see  
What more is left that could be stripped from me,  
But still the silent skipper shakes his head :  
Ah me ! I think I never shall be dead !

### AT LAST.



THE years I lost before I knew you,  
Love !

O, the hills I climbed and came not to you,  
Love !

Ah ! who shall render unto us to make  
Us glad,

The things which for and of each other's sake  
We might have had ?

If you and I had sat and played together,  
Love,

Two speechless babies in the summer weather,  
Love,

By one sweet brook which, though it dried up long  
    Ago,  
Still makes for me to-day a sweeter song  
    Than all I know, —

If hand in hand through the mysterious gateway,  
    Love,  
Of womanhood, we had first looked and straightway,  
    Love,  
Had whispered to each other softly, ere  
    It yet  
Was dawn, what now in noonday heat and fear  
    We both forget, —

If all of this had given its completeness,  
    Love,  
To every hour would it be added sweetness,  
    Love?  
Could I know sooner whether it were well  
    Or ill  
With thee? One wish could I more surely tell,  
    More swift fulfil?

Ah ! vainly thus I sit and dream and ponder,  
    Love,  
Losing the precious present while I wonder,  
    Love,  
About the days in which you grew and came  
    To be  
So beautiful, and did not know the name  
    Or sight of me.

But all lost things are in the angels' keeping,  
                     Love ;  
 No past is dead for us, but only sleeping,  
                     Love ;  
 The years of Heaven will all earth's little pain  
                     Make good,  
 Together there we can begin again  
                     In babyhood.

### MEMOIR OF A QUEEN.



HER name, before she was a queen, boots  
                     not.

When she was crowned, her kingdom said,  
                     " The Queen ! "

And, after that, all other names too mean  
 By far had seemed. Perhaps all were forgot,  
 Save " Queen, sweet queen."

  Such pitiable lot  
 As till her birth her kingdom had, was seen  
 Never in all fair lands, so torn between  
 False grasping powers, that toiled and fought, but got  
 No peace.

                    All curious search is wholly vain  
 For written page or stone whereon occurs  
 A mention of the kingdom which obeyed  
 This sweet queen's rule. But centuries have laid  
 No dead queen down in royal sepulchres  
 Whose reign was greater or more blest than hers.

## OUR ANGELS.



H ! not with any sound they come, or sign,  
Which fleshly ear or eye can recognize ;  
No curiosity can compass or surprise

The secret of that intercourse divine  
Which God permits, ordains, across the line,  
The changeless line which bars  
Our earth from other stars.

But they do come and go continually,  
Our blessed angels, no less ours than His ;  
The blessed angels whom we think we miss ;  
Whose empty graves we weep to name or see,  
And vainly watch, as once in Galilee  
One, weeping, watched in vain,  
Where her lost Christ had lain.

Whenever in some bitter grief we find,  
All unawares, a deep, mysterious sense  
Of hidden comfort come, we know not whence ;  
When suddenly we see, where we were blind ;  
Where we had struggled, are content, resigned ;  
Are strong where we were weak, —  
And no more strive nor seek, —

Then we may know that from the far glad skies,  
To note our need, the watchful God has bent,  
And for our instant help has called and sent,

Of all our loving angels, the most wise  
And tender one, to point to us where lies  
    The path that will be best,  
    The path of peace and rest.

And when we find on every sky and field  
    A sudden, new, and mystic light, which fills  
    Our every sense with speechless joy, and thrills  
Us, till we yield ourselves as children yield  
Themselves and watch the spells magicians wield,  
    With tireless, sweet surprise,  
    And rapture in their eyes, —

Then we may know our little ones have run  
    Away for just one moment, from their play  
    In heavenly gardens, and in their old way  
Are walking by our side, and one by one,  
At all sweet things beneath the earthly sun,  
    Are pointing joyfully,  
    And calling us to see !

Ah ! when we learn the spirit sound and sign,  
    And instantly our angels recognize,  
    No weariness can tire, no pain surprise  
Our souls rapt in the intercourse divine,  
Which God permits, ordains, across the line,  
    The changeless line which bars  
    Our earth from other stars.

MAZZINI.



HAT he is dead the sons of kings are glad ;  
And in their beds the tyrants sounder sleep.  
Now he is dead his martyrdom will reap  
Late harvest of the palms it should have had  
In life. Too late the tardy lands are sad.  
His unclaimed crown in secret they will keep  
For ages, while in chains they vainly weep,  
And vainly grope to find the roads he bade  
Them take.

O glorious soul ! there is no dearth  
Of worlds. There must be many better worth  
Thy presence and thy leadership than this.  
No doubt, on some great sun to-day, thy birth  
Is for a race, the dawn of Freedom's bliss,  
Which but for thee it might for ages miss.

"WHEN THE TIDE COMES IN."



HEN the tide comes in,  
At once the shore and sea begin  
Together to be glad.  
What the tide has brought

No man has asked, no man has sought :

What other tides have had  
The deep sand hides away ;  
The last bit of the wrecks they wrought  
Was burned up yesterday.

When the tide goes out,  
The shore looks dark and sad with doubt.  
The landmarks are all lost.  
For the tide to turn  
Men patient wait, men restless yearn.  
Sweet channels they have crossed,  
In boats that rocked with glee,  
Stretch now bare stony roads that burn  
And lead away from sea.

When the tide comes in  
In hearts, at once the hearts begin  
Together to be glad.  
What the tide has brought  
They do not care, they have not sought.  
All joy they ever had  
The new joy multiplies ;  
All pain by which it may be bought  
Seems paltry sacrifice.

When the tide goes out,  
The hearts are wrung with fear and doubt :  
All trace of joy seems lost.  
Will the tide return ?  
In restless questioning they yearn,



With hands unclasped, uncrossed,  
They weep, on separate ways.  
Ah! darling, shall we ever learn  
Love's tidal hours and days?

## THE SINGER'S HILLS.



He dwelt where level lands lay low and drear,  
Long stretches of waste meadow pale and  
sere,

With dull seas languid tiding up and down,  
Turning the lifeless sands from white to brown, —  
Wide barren fields for miles and miles, until  
The pale horizon walled them in, and still  
No lifted peak, no slope, not even mound  
To raise and cheer the weary eye was found.  
From boyhood up and down these dismal lands,  
And pacing to and fro the barren sands,  
And always gazing, gazing seaward, went  
The Singer. Daily with the sad winds blent  
His yearning voice.

“There must be hills,” he said,  
“I know they stand at sunset rosy red,  
And purple in the dewy shadowed morn;  
Great forest trees like babes are rocked and borne  
Upon their breasts, and flowers like jewels shine  
Around their feet, and gold and silver line

Their hidden chambers, and great cities rise  
Stately where their protecting shadow lies,  
And men grow brave and women are more fair  
'Neath higher skies, and in the clearer air !”  
One day thus longing, gazing, lo ! in awe  
Made calm by ecstasy, he sudden saw,  
Far out to seaward, mountain peaks appear,  
Slow rising from the water pale and clear.  
Purple and azure, there they were, as he  
Had faithful yearning visions they must be ;  
Purple and azure and bright rosy red,  
Like flashing jewels, on the sea they shed  
Their quenchless light.

Great tears ran down  
The Singer's cheeks, and through the busy town,  
And all across the dreary meadow lands,  
And all along the dreary lifeless sands,  
He called aloud,

“Ho ! tarry ! tarry ye !  
Behold those purple mountains in the sea !”  
The people saw no mountains !

“He is mad,”  
They careless said, and went their way and had  
No farther thought of him.

And so, among  
His fellows' noisy, idle, crowding throng,  
The Singer walked, as strangers walk who speak  
A foreign tongue and have no friend to seek.  
And yet the silent joy which filled his face  
Sometimes their wonder stirred a little space,  
And following his constant seaward look,  
One wistful gaze they also seaward took.

One day the Singer was not seen. Men said  
That as the early day was breaking red,  
He rowed far out to sea, rowed swift and strong,  
Toward the spot where he had gazed so long.  
Then all the people shook their heads, and went  
A little sadly, thinking he had spent  
His life in vain, and sorry they no more  
Should hear his sweet mad songs along their shore.  
But when the sea with sunset hues was dyed,  
A boat came slowly drifting with the tide,  
Nor oar nor rudder set to turn or stay,  
And on the crimson deck the Singer lay.  
"Ah, he is dead," some cried. "No! he but sleeps,"  
Said others, "madman that he is, joy keeps  
Sweet vigils with him now."

The light keel grazed

The sands; alert and swift the Singer raised  
His head, and with red cheeks and eyes aflame  
Leaped out, and shouted loud, and called by name  
Each man, and breathlessly his story told.  
"Lo, I have landed on the hills of gold!  
See, these are flowers, and these are fruits, and these  
Are boughs from off the giant forest trees;  
And these are jewels which lie loosely there,  
And these are stuffs which beauteous maidens wear!"  
And staggering he knelt upon the sands  
As laying burdens down.

But empty hands

His fellows saw, and passed on smiling. Yet,  
The ecstasy in which his face was set  
Again smote on their hearts with sudden sense  
Of half involuntary reverence.

And some said, whispering, "Alack, is he  
The madman? Have ye never heard there be  
Some spells which make men blind?"

And thenceforth they  
More closely watched the Singer day by day,  
Till finally they said, "He is not mad.  
There be such hills, and treasure to be had  
For seeking there! We too without delay  
Will sail."

And of the men who sailed that way,  
Some found the purple mountains in the sea,  
Landed, and roamed their treasure countries free,  
And drifted back with brimming laden hands.  
Walking along the lifeless silent sands,  
The Singer, gazing ever seaward, knew,  
Well knew the odors which the soft wind blew  
Of all the fruits and flowers and boughs they bore.  
Standing with hands stretched eager on the shore,  
When they leaped out, he called, "Now God be praised,  
Sweet comrades, were they then not fair?"

Amazed,  
And with dull scorn, the other men who brought  
No treasures, found no mountains, and saw naught  
In these men's hands, beheld them kneeling low,  
Lifting, shouting, and running to and fro  
As men unlading argosies whose freight  
Of gorgeous things bewildered by its weight.

Tireless the great years waxed; the great years  
waned;  
Slowly the Singer's comrades grew and gained

Till they were goodly number.

No man's scorn  
Could hurt or hinder them. No pity born  
Of it could make them blush, or once make less  
Their joy's estate ; and as for loneliness  
They knew it not.

Still rise the magic hills,  
Purple and gold and red ; the shore still thrills  
With fragrance when the sunset winds begin  
To blow and waft the subtle odors in  
From treasure laden boats that drift, and bide  
The hours and moments of the wave and tide,  
Laden with fruits and boughs and flowers rare,  
And jewels such as monarchs do not wear,  
And costly stuffs which dazzle on the sight,  
Stuffs wrought for purest virgin, bravest knight ;  
And men with cheeks all red, and eyes aflame,  
And hearts that call to hearts by brothers' name,  
Still leap out on the silent lifeless sands,  
And staggering with over-burdened hands  
Joyous lay down the treasures they have brought,  
While smiling, pitying, the world sees nought !



## COVERT.



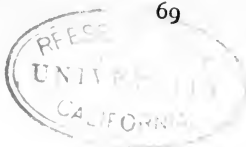
NE day, when sunny fields lay warm and still,  
And from their tufted hillocks, thick and  
sweet

With moss and pine and ferns, such spicy  
heat

Rose up, it seemed the air to over-fill,  
And quicken every sense with subtle thrill,  
I rambled on with careless, aimless feet,  
And lingered idly, finding all so sweet.

Sudden, almost beneath my footsteps' weight,  
Almost before the sunny silence heard  
Their sound, from a low bush, which scarcely stirred  
A twig at lightening of its hidden freight,  
Flew, frightened from her nest, the small brown mate  
Of some melodious, joyous, soaring bird,  
Whose song that instant high in air I heard.

. . . . .  
"Ah ! Heart," I said, "when days are warm and sweet,  
And sunny hours for very joy are still,  
And every sense feels subtle, languid thrill  
Of voiceless memory's renewing heat,  
Fly not at sound of strangers' aimless feet !  
Of thy love's distant song drink all thy fill !  
Thy hiding-place is safe. Glad heart, keep still !"



WAITING.



KNOW it will not be to-day ;  
 I know it will not be to-morrow ;  
 Oh, half in joy and half in sorrow,  
 I watch the slow swift hours away ;  
 I bid them haste, then bid them stay,  
 I long so for the coming day.

I long so, I would rather wait ;  
 Each hour I see the unseen comer ;  
 Each hour turns ripe in secret summer  
 The joys which I anticipate.  
 O precious feet, come slow, come late !  
 I long so, it is bliss to wait !

Ah, sweet sad life, so far to-day !  
 Ah, sweet sad life, so near to-morrow !  
 Can joy be joy when we miss sorrow ?  
 When earth's last sun has rolled away  
 In tideless time, and we can say  
 No more, "To-morrow," or "To-day" ?



## RENUNCIATION.



WHEREFORE thus, apart with droop-  
ing wings

Thou stillest, saddest angel,  
With hidden face, as if but bitter things

Thou hadst, and no evangel  
Of good tidings ?

Thou know'st that through our tears  
Of hasty, selfish weeping,  
Comes surer sun ; and for our petty fears  
Of loss, thou hast in keeping  
A greater gain than all of which we dreamed.  
Thou knowest that in grasping  
The bright possessions which so precious seemed,  
We lose them ; but, if clasping  
Thy faithful hand, we tread with steadfast feet  
The path of thy appointing,  
There waits for us a treasury of sweet  
Delight ; royal anointing  
With oil of gladness and of strength !

O, things

Of Heaven, Christ's evangel  
Bearing, call us with shining face and poised wings,  
Thou sweetest, dearest angel !



## BURN'T SHIPS.



LOVE, sweet Love, who came with rosy  
sail

And foaming prow across the misty sea !

O Love, brave Love, whose faith was full  
and free

That lands of sun and gold, which could not fail,  
Lay in the west, that bloom no wintry gale

Could blight, and eyes whose love thine own should  
be,

Called thee, with steadfast voice of prophecy,  
To shores unknown !

O Love, poor Love, avail

Thee nothing now thy faiths, thy braveries ;

There is no sun, no bloom ; a cold wind strips

The bitter foam from off the wave where dips

No more thy prow ; the eyes are hostile eyes ;

The gold is hidden ; vain thy tears and cries ;

O Love, poor Love, why didst thou burn thy ships ?



## RESURGAM.



OW, still, unutterably weak,  
In human helplessness more helpless than  
The smallest of God's other creatures can  
Be left, I lie and do not speak.  
Walls rise and close  
Around. No warning shows  
To me, who am but blind, which wall  
Will shelter, and which one will fall  
And crush me in the dust,  
Not that I sinned, but that it must.  
Each hour, within my heart, some sweet hope  
dies.  
Each night the dead form lies  
Of some fair purpose which I could not save,  
Ready for day to carry out and hide  
In a dishonored grave.  
My strongest will  
Finds stronger fate stand side by side  
With it, its utmost efforts conquering still  
With such swift might, the dust in which I lie  
Scarce quivers with my struggle and my pain,  
Scarce echoes with my cry.  
Grief comes and passes by,  
And Joy comes hand in hand  
With Grief, each bearing crowns with buds of  
snow,  
Both laying crowns upon my head.  
Soon as the buds are open, it were vain  
To try to separate or understand —

No sense of mine can feel or know —  
Which flowers the hand of Joy has shed,  
And which the hand of Pain.  
Therefore I do not choose ;  
Fearing, desiring equally from each,  
I wait. I do not dare refuse.  
Only one sound can reach  
Me where I lie, can stir my veins,  
Or make me lift my eyes.  
That sound drops from the skies,  
A still small voice, — round it great silence lies :  
“ Not one of all these things remains.  
Thou shalt arise ! ”

Somewhere on earth,  
Marked, sealed, mine from its hour of birth,  
A stairway lies, down which I shall descend,  
And pass through a dark gate, which at my  
name,  
And at no other, will swing back and close.  
Where lies this stairway no man knows,  
No man has even wondered. Only I  
Remember it continually.  
Spring never came,  
Her grasses setting, that I did not bend  
Low in the fields, saying : “ Lend  
But part trust, O Summer ! Many graves,  
Before this sweet grass waves  
Half grown, must open. Ah ! will reapers reap  
Harvest from my low resting-place  
This year ? Or will the withered sods and I

Lifeless together lie,  
With silent, upturned face,  
Before the autumn winds sweep by ? ”  
And when the winter snows lie deep,  
I think : “ How hard to find,  
Just now, those hidden stairs that wind  
For me.” The time must near the end.  
Perhaps for those I leave behind,  
More sad to see the snow. But its pure white,  
I think, would shed a little light,  
And stretch like alabaster skies  
Above the stairway dark I must descend,  
That I may rise.

Somewhere on earth,  
Marked, sealed, mine from its hour of birth,  
There lies a shining stone,  
My own.  
Perhaps it still is in the quarry's hold.  
Oh ! Pine Tree, wave in winter's cold  
Swifter above it ; in the summer's heat  
Drop spices on it, thick and sweet ;  
Quicken its patient crystals' growth.  
Oh ! be not loth,  
Quarry and Pine,  
And stir of birds in the still North,  
And suns that shine, —  
Give up my smooth white stone ! Hasten it forth.  
My soul in bondage lies.  
I must arise.

Perhaps upon the shining stone,  
                    My own,  
Even to-day the hammers ring.  
The workman does not sing.  
He is a lover and he has a child ;  
To him a gravestone is a fearful thing.  
            He has not smiled  
Since under his strong hands the white stone  
            came,  
            Though he is slow and dull,  
            And could not give a name  
To thoughts which fill his heart too full  
            Of prophecy and pain.  
O Workman, sing ! See how the white dust flies  
            And glistens in the sunny air.  
            No grain but counts ;  
Some fair spot grows more fair  
By it, each moment. In the skies,  
            My moment must be near.  
Workman, there is on earth no loss, no waste.  
            Sing loud, and make all haste ;  
            I must arise.

Perhaps even now the shining stone,  
                    My own,  
Stands ready, — arch and base,  
And chiselled lines, and space  
For name all done : and yesterday  
Some sorrowing ones stood round it silently,  
            And looked at it through tears,  
            But passed it by,

Saying, with trembling lips : “ No, no !  
For stone more beautiful than this we seek  
Sculptor, dost thou not know  
What lines will make the marble show  
A deeper grief ? ” Ah ! mourners, speak  
In lower voice. Ye do not see  
What presence guards  
The stone. More than ye dream retards  
Your will. The stone waits there for me.  
My soul in bondage lies.  
I must arise.

Then, when I have descended, and the stone  
Above the stairway has been set,  
The tears of those who reckoned me their own  
A little space will wet  
The grass ; but soon all saddened days  
Count up to comforted and busy years :  
All living men must go their ways  
And leave their dead behind. The tideless light  
Of sun and moon and stars, — silence of night  
And noise of day, and whirling of the great  
Round world itself, — yea,  
All things which are and are not work to lay  
The dead away.  
The crumbling of the stone, more late,  
The sinking of the little mound  
To unmarked level, where with noisy sound  
Roam idle and unwitting feet,  
Least tokens are and smallest part  
Of the oblivion complete

Which wraps a human grave ;  
And unto me, the hour when the last heart  
Has ceased to save  
My memory, the year  
That sees my white stone lying low,  
The century that sees the grave mound grow,  
Free of my dust, to solid earth again,  
Made ready for new dead, — all these will be  
Alike to me,  
Alike uncounted will remain.  
Their sound I shall not hear  
As I arise.

They mark no moments in the skies  
Through which I mount. As constant as  
God's law,  
Bearing all joy and grief my first years saw,  
Even my babyhood, —  
Bearing all evil and all good  
Of ripest age, — nowise  
Escaping and nowise forgetting one  
Of all the actions done, —  
And bearing all that lies  
In utmost law for me, — all God's great will,  
All God's great mercy, — still  
I shall arise.

The fool asks, " With what flesh ? in joy or pain ?  
Helped or unhelped ? and lonely, or again  
Surrounded by our earthly friends ? "  
I know not ; and I glory that I do  
Not know : that for Eternity's great ends

God counted me as worthy of such trust,  
That I need not be told.

I hold

That if it be

Less than enough to any soul to know  
Itself immortal, immortality

In all its boundless spaces will not find

A place designed

So small, so low,

That to a fitting home such soul can go.

Out to the earthward brink

Of that great tideless sea

Light from Christ's garments streams.

Cowards who fear to tread such beams

The angels can but pity when they sink.

Believing thus, I joy although I lie in dust.

I joy, not that I ask or choose,

But simply that I must.

I love and fear not ; and I cannot lose,

One instant, this great certainty of peace.

Long as God ceases not, I cannot cease ;

I must arise.





## THE VILLAGE LIGHTS.



ONLY a little village street,  
Lying along a mountain's side ;  
Only the silences which meet  
When weary hands and weary feet  
By night's sweet rest are satisfied ;  
Only the dark of summer nights ;  
Only the commonest of sights,  
The glimmer of the village lights !

I know not, then, why it should bring  
Into my eyes such sudden tears.  
But to the mountain's sheltering  
The little village seems to cling,  
As child, all unaware of fears,  
Unconscious that it is caressed,  
In perfect peace and perfect rest  
Asleep upon its mother's breast.

No stir, no sound ! The shadows creep.  
The old and young, in common trust,  
Are lying down to wait, asleep,  
While Life and Joy will come to keep  
With Death and Pain what tryst they must.  
O faith ! for faith almost too great !  
Come slow, O day of evil freight !  
O village hearts, sleep well, sleep late !

## TRANSPLANTED.



HEN Christ, the Gardener, said, "These  
many years  
Behold how I have waited  
For fruit upon this barren tree, which bears  
But leaves ! With unabated  
Patience I have nurtured it ; have fed  
Its roots with choicest juices ;  
The sweetest suns their tender warmth have shed  
On it ; still it refuses  
Its blossom ; all the balmiest summer rain  
Has bathed it ; unrepaying,  
Still, its green and glittering leaves, in vain  
And empty show arraying,  
It flaunts, contented in its uselessness,  
Ever my eye offending.  
Uproot it ! Set it in the wilderness !  
There no more gentle tending  
Shall it receive ; but, pricked by nettle stings,  
And bruised and hurt, and crowded  
By stones, and weeds, and noxious growths of things  
That kill, and chilled 'neath shrouded  
And sunless skies, from whose black clouds no rain  
Shall fall to soothe its anguish,  
Bearing the utmost it can feel of pain,  
Unsuccored, it shall languish !"

When next across the wilderness Christ came,  
Seeking his Royal Garden,

A tree stood in his pathway, all aflame,  
And bending with its burden  
Of burnished gold. No fruit inside the wall  
Had grown to such perfection !  
It was the outcast tree ! Deprived of all  
Kind nurture and protection,  
Thrust out among vile things of poisonous growth,  
Condemned, disgraced, and banished,  
Lonely and scorned, its energies put forth  
Anew. All false show vanished ;  
Its roots struck downward with determined hold,  
No more the surface roaming ;  
And from th' unfriendly soil, a thousand-fold  
Of yield compelled.

The coming  
Of the Gardener now in sweet humility  
It waited. trusting, trembling ;  
Then Christ, the Gardener, smiled and said :

“ O tree,

This day, in the assembling  
Of mine, in Paradise, shalt thou be found.  
Henceforth in me abiding,  
More golden fruit shalt thou bring forth ; and round  
Thy root the living waters gliding  
Shall give the greenness which can never fade.  
While angels, with thy new name sealing  
Thee, shall come, and gather in thy shade  
Leaves for the nations' healing ! ”

## BEST.



OTHER, I see you with your nursery light,  
 Leading your babies, all in white,  
 To their sweet rest ;  
 Christ, the Good Shepherd, carries mine  
 to-night,  
 And that is best.

I cannot help tears, when I see them twine  
 Their fingers in yours, and their bright curls shine  
 On your warm breast ;  
 But the Saviour's is purer than yours or mine,  
 He can love best !

You tremble each hour because your arms  
 Are weak ; your heart is wrung with alarms,  
 And sore opprest ;  
 My darlings are safe, out of reach of harms,  
 And that is best.

You know, over yours may hang even now  
 Pain and disease, whose fulfilling slow  
 Naught can arrest ;  
 Mine in God's gardens run to and fro,  
 And that is best.

You know that of yours, your feeblest one  
 And dearest may live long years alone,  
 Unloved unblest ;

Mine are cherished of saints around God's throne,  
And that is best.

You must dread for yours the crime that sears,  
Dark guilt unwashed by repentant tears,  
And unconfessed ;  
Mine entered spotless on eternal years,  
O, how much the best !

But grief is selfish ; I cannot see  
Always why I should so stricken be,  
More than the rest ;  
But I know that, as well as for them, for me  
God did the best !

## MORNING-GLORY.



ONDROUS interlacement !

Holding fast to threads by green and silky  
rings,

With the dawn it spreads its white and  
purple wings ;

Generous in its bloom, and sheltering while it clings,  
Sturdy morning-glory.

Creeping through the casement,  
Slanting to the floor in dusty, shining beams,  
Dancing on the door in quick, fantastic gleams,

Comes the new day's light, and pours in tideless  
streams,  
Golden morning-glory.

In the lowly basement,  
Rocking in the sun, the baby's cradle stands ;  
Now the little one thrusts out his rosy hands ;  
Soon his eyes will open ; then in all the lands  
No such morning-glory !

## OCTOBER.



ENDING above the spicy woods which  
blaze,  
Arch skies so blue they flash, and hold the  
sun

Immeasurably far ; the waters run  
Too slow, so freighted are the river-ways  
With gold of elms and birches from the maze  
Of forests. Chestnuts, clicking one by one,  
Escape from satin burs ; her fringes done,  
The gentian spreads them out in sunny days,  
And, like late revelers at dawn, the chance  
Of one sweet, mad, last hour, all things assail,  
And conquering, flush and spin ; while, to enhance  
The spell, by sunset door, wrapped in a veil  
Of red and purple mists, the summer, pale,  
Steals back alone for one more song and dance.

## MY BEES.

## AN ALLEGORY.



BEES, sweet bees ! " I said, " that nearest  
field  
Is shining white with fragrant immortelles.  
Fly swiftly there and drain those honey  
wells."

Then, spicy pines the sunny hive to shield,  
I set, and patient for the autumn's yield  
Of sweet I waited.

When the village bells  
Rang frosty clear, and from their satin cells  
The chestnuts leaped, rejoicing, I unsealed  
My hive.

Alas ! no snowy honey there  
Was stored. My wicked bees had borne away  
Their queen and left no trace.

That very day,  
An idle drone who sauntered through the air  
I tracked and followed, and he led me where  
My truant bees and stolen honey lay.  
Twice faithless bees ! They had sought out to eat  
Rank, bitter herbs. The honey was not sweet.

## THE ABBOT PAPHNUTIUS.



OW on the gray stone floor Paphnutius knelt  
 Scourging his breast, and drawing tight his  
 belt  
 Of bloody nails.

“O God, dear God !” he cried,  
 “These many years that I have crucified  
 My sinful flesh, and called upon thee night  
 And day, are they all reckoned in thy sight?  
 And wilt thou tell me now which saint of thine  
 I am most like ? and is there bond or sign  
 That I can find him by and win him here,  
 That we may dwell as brothers close and dear ?”

Silent the river kept its gentle flow  
 Beneath the walls ; the ash-trees to and fro  
 Swayed silent, save a sigh ; a sunbeam laid  
 Its bar along the Abbot's beads, which made  
 Uncanny rhythm across the quiet air,  
 The only ghost of sound which sounded there,  
 As fast their smooth-worn balls he turned and told,  
 And trembled, thinking he had been too bold.  
 But suddenly, with solemn clang and swell,  
 In the high tower rang out the vesper-bell ;  
 And subtly hidden in the pealing tones,  
 Melodious dropping from celestial thrones,  
 These words the glad Paphnutius thrilling heard :  
 “Be not afraid ! In this thou hast not erred ;



Of all my saints, the one whose heart most suits  
To thine is one who, playing reedy flutes,  
In the great market-place goes up and down,  
While men and women dance, in yonder town."

Oh, much Paphnutius wondered, as he went  
To robe him for the journey. Day was spent,  
And cunning night had spread and lit her snares  
For souls made weak by weariness and cares,  
When to the glittering town the Abbot came.  
With secret shudder, half affright, half shame,  
Close cowed, he mingled in the babbling throng,  
And with reluctant feet was borne along  
To where, by torches' fitful glare and smoke,  
A band of wantons danced, and screamed, and spoke  
Such words as fill pure men with shrinking fear.  
"Good Lord deliver me! Can he be here,"  
The frightened Abbot said, "the man I seek?"  
Lo, as he spoke, a man reeled dizzy, weak  
With ribald laughter, clutching him by gown  
And shoulder; and before his feet threw down  
Soft twanging flutes, which rolled upon the stone  
And broke. Outcried the Abbot with a groan,  
Seizing the player firm in mighty hands,  
"O man! what doest thou with these vile bands  
Of harlots? God hath told to me thou art  
A saint of his, and one whose life and heart  
Are like my own; and I have journeyed here  
For naught but finding thee."

In maze and fear,  
The player lifted up his blood-shot eyes,

And stammered drunkenly, "Good father, lies  
Thy road some other way. Take better heed  
Next time thou seekest saints ! One single deed  
Of good I never did. I live in sins.  
Unhand me now ! another dance begins."  
"Flute-player," said the Abbot, stern and sweet,  
"God cannot lie ! Some deed thou hast done meet  
For serving him. Bethink thee now, and tell.  
Where was it that the blessed chance befell ?"  
Half-sobered by the Abbot's voice and mien,  
The player spoke again, "No more I ween  
Of serving God, than if no God there were ;  
But now I do remember me of her  
That once I saved from hands of robber-men,  
Whose chief I was. I know I wondered then  
What new blood could have quickened in my veins.  
I gave her, spite myself, of our rich gains  
Three hundred pieces of good gold, to free  
Her husband and her sons from slavery.  
But love of God had nought to do with this :  
I know him, love him not ; I do not miss  
Nor find him in the world. I love my sins.  
Now let me go ! another dance begins."  
"Yes, go !" the Abbot gently said, and took  
His grasp from off his arm. "But, brother, look,  
If God has thus to thee this one good deed  
So fully counted, wilt thou not take heed  
Thyself, remembering him ?"

Then homeward slow,  
Alone and sad, where he had thought to go

Triumphant with a new-found brother-saint,  
The Abbot went. But vain he set restraint  
Upon his wondering thoughts : through prayer, through  
chant,

The question ever rang, "What could God want  
To teach me, showing me that sinful man  
As saint of nearest kin to me, who can  
Abide no sin of thought or deed."

Three days

The Abbot went his patient, silent ways.  
The river lapped in gentle, silent flow  
The cloister-wall; the ash-trees to and fro  
Swayed silent, save a sigh : the third night, came —  
Low rapping at the cloister-door, in shame  
And fear — the player !

Then Paphnutius rose,  
His pale face kindled red with joyful glows ;  
The monks in angry, speechless wonder stood,  
Seeing this vagabond to brotherhood  
Made so soon welcome. But the Abbot said,  
"O brothers ! this flute-player in such stead  
Is held of God, that, when in loneliness  
I knelt and prayed for some new saint to bless  
Our house, God spoke, and told me this man's name,  
As his who should be brother when he came."

Flute-player and Paphnutius both have slept  
In dust for centuries. The world has kept  
No record of them save this tale, which sets  
But bootless lesson : still the world forgets

That God knows best what hearts are counted his ;  
 Still men deny the thing whose sign they miss ;  
 Still pious souls pray as Paphnutius prayed  
 For brother-souls in their own semblance made ;  
 And slowly learn, with outcries and complaints,  
 That publicans and sinners may be saints !

### NOON.

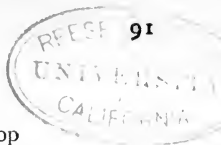


SWEET, delusive Noon,  
 Which the morning climbs to find ;  
 O moment sped too soon,  
 And morning left behind ;

While pale gray hours descend  
 Fast on the farther slope,  
 Where a darkness marks the end  
 Of that day's work and hope.

O Noon, if thou couldst stay !  
 Were there but spell to arrest  
 Thy magic moment, — to slay  
 Night on the fair sky's breast,

Or make the morning haste,  
 Or the chilly evening tarry,  
 And the liquid light they waste  
 Give thee, O Noon, to carry !



O cruel, stinted drop,  
 In sapphire chalice so deep  
 That if million suns should stop  
 Its walls their light could keep!

. . . . .

O Love, O Joys above  
 All words of my telling, stay!  
 Does your swiftness mean that love  
 Has day, and noon of day?

This sweetness more, more sweet,  
 And this brightness growing bright,  
 This silent, delicious heat,  
 This dearer, tenderer light,—

O Love, mean these a noon,  
 A noon which thou climb'st to find,  
 That moment over too soon,  
 With morning left behind?

O Love, we kneel, we pray,  
 For our sweet Love's precious sake;  
 Set here the bound of our day;  
 Grant us this choice we make.

We fear the gray hour's sight,  
 The moment over too soon;  
 Spare us the chill of the night;  
 We will forego our noon!

## IN THE PASS.



CROSS my road a mountain rose of rock, —  
Fierce, naked rock. Its shadow, black and  
chill,

Shut out the sun. Gray clouds, which  
seemed to mock

With cruel challenges my helpless will,  
Sprang up and scaled the steepest crags. The shrill  
Winds, two and two, went breathless out and in,  
Filling the darkened air with evil din.

I turned away my weary steps and said :  
“This must be confine of some fearful place ;  
Here is no path for mortal man to tread.  
Who enters here will tremble, face to face  
With powers of darkness, whose unearthly race  
In cloud and wind and storm delights to dwell,  
Ruling them all by an uncanny spell.”

The guide but smiled, and, holding fast my hand,  
Compelled me up a path I had not seen.  
It wound round ledges where I scarce could stand ;  
It plunged to sudden sunless depths between  
Immeasurable cliffs, which seemed to lean  
Together, closing as we passed, like door  
Of dungeon which would open nevermore.

I said again : “I will not go. This way  
Is not for mortal feet.” Again the guide

But smiled, and I again could but obey.  
The path grew narrow ; thundering by its side,  
As loud as ocean at its highest tide,  
A river rushed, all black, and green, and white,  
A boiling stream of molten malachite.

Sudden I heard a joyous cry, " Behold, behold !"  
And, smiling still on me, the good guide turned,  
And pointed where broad, sunny fields unrolled  
And spread like banners ; green, so green it burned,  
And lit the air like red ; and blue which yearned  
From all the lofty dome of sky, and bent  
And folded low and circling like a tent ;

And forests ranged like armies, round and round,  
At feet of mountains of eternal snow ;  
And valleys all alive with happy sound ;  
The song of birds ; swift brooks' delicious flow ;  
The mystic hum of million things that grow ;  
The stir of men ; and gladdening every way,  
Voices of little children at their play ;

And shining banks of flowers which words refuse  
To paint ; such colors as in summer light  
The rarest, fleetest summer rainbows use,  
But set in gold of sun, and silver white  
Of dew, as thick as gems which blind the sight  
On altar fronts, inlaid with priceless things,  
The jewelled gifts of centuries of kings.

Then, sitting half in dream, and half in fear  
Of how such wondrous miracle were wrought.

Thy name, dear friend, I sudden seemed to hear  
Through all the charmed air.

My loving thought

Through patient years had vainly groped and sought,  
And found no hidden thing so rare, so good,  
That it might furnish thy similitude.

O noble soul, whose strengths like mountains stand,  
Whose purposes, like adamantine stone,  
Bar roads to feeble feet, and wrap the land  
In seeming shadow, thou, too, hast thine own  
Sweet valleys full of flowers, for me alone,  
Unseen, unknown, undreamed of by the mass,  
Who do not know the secret of the Pass.

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, AMPEZZO PASS, June 22, 1869.

### AMREETA WINE.



HE rose up from the golden feast,  
And her voice rang like the sea ;  
“ Sir Knight, put down thy glass and come  
To the battlement with me.

“ That was a charmed wine thou drank'st,  
Signed white from heaven, signed black from hell.  
Alas ! alas ! for the bitter thing  
The sign hath forced thy lips to tell ! ”



“Ho here! Ho there! Lift up and bear  
My choice wine out,” she said;  
“That which hath brand of a clasping hand,  
And the seal blood-red.”

“Ho here! Ho there! To the castle stair  
Bear all that branded wine;  
And dash it far, where the breakers are  
Whitest, of the brine!


“Let no man dare to shrink or spare,  
Or one red drop to spill;  
Of the endless pain of that wine’s hot stain  
Let the salt sea bear its fill.

“O woe of mine! O woe of thine!  
O woe of endless thirst!  
O woe for the Amreeta wine,  
By fate and thee accurst!”

The knight spake words of sore dismay  
But her face was white like stone;  
She saw him mount and ride away,  
And made no moan.

The wind blew east, the wind blew west,  
The airs from sepulchres;  
No royal heart in all of them  
So dead as hers!

## SOLITUDE.

“ SOLITUDE,” I said, “sweet Solitude !  
I follow fast ; I kneel to find thy trace ;  
I listen low in every secret place ;  
I lay rough hand on eager human lips ;  
I set aside all near companionships ;  
I know thou hast a subtler, rarer good.  
O Priestess, how shalt thou be found and wooed ? ”  
I tracked her where she passed in trackless fields ;  
I trod her path where footprint had not staid  
In sunless woods ; I stopped to hark where laid  
Her very shadow its great bound of light  
And gloom in lifeless arctic day and night ;  
And where, to tropic sun, mid-ocean yields  
Its silent, windless waves, like mirror-shields ;

But found her not. Great tribes roamed free  
In every trackless field and wood. More plain  
Than speech I heard their voice : in rain, the rain  
Of endless chatter, and in sun, the sun  
Of merry laughing noise, were never done.  
All silence dinned with sound ; and, jostling me,  
In every place, went crowds I could not see.

In anger, then, at last I cried, “ Betray  
Whomever thou canst cheat, O Solitude,  
With promise of thy subtler, rarer good !

I seek my joy henceforth in haunts of men,  
Forgetting thee, where thou hast never been !"  
When, lo ! that instant sounded close and sweet,  
Above the rushing of the city street,  
The voice of Solitude herself, to say,  
"Ha, loving comrade, met at last ! Which way ?"

*"NOT AS I WILL."*



LINDFOLDED and alone I stand  
With unknown thresholds on each hand ;  
The darkness deepens as I grope,  
Afraid to fear, afraid to hope :

Yet this one thing I learn to know  
Each day more surely as I go,  
That doors are opened, ways are made,  
Burdens are lifted or are laid,  
By some great law unseen and still,  
Unfathomed purpose to fulfil,  
"Not as I will."

Blindfolded and alone I wait ;  
Loss seems too bitter, gain too late ;  
Too heavy burdens in the load  
And too few helpers on the road ;  
And joy is weak and grief is strong,  
And years and days so long, so long :  
Yet this one thing I learn to know  
Each day more surely as I go,

That I am glad the good and ill  
By changeless law are ordered still,  
    “Not as I will.”

“Not as I will” : the sound grows sweet  
Each time my lips the words repeat.  
“Not as I will” : the darkness feels  
More safe than light when this thought steals  
Like whispered voice to calm and bless  
All unrest and all loneliness.  
“Not as I will,” because the One  
Who loved us first and best has gone  
Before us on the road, and still  
For us must all his love fulfil,  
    “Not as we will.”



## LAND.



LAND, sweet land! New World! my  
world!

No mortal knows what seas I sail  
With hope and faith which never fail,

With heart and will which never quail,  
Till on thy shore my sails are furled,  
O land, sweet land! New World! my world!

O land, sweet land! New World! my world!  
I cross again, again, again  
The magic seas. Each time I reign  
Crowned conqueror. Each time remain  
New shores on which my sails are furled,  
A sweeter land! A newer world!

O world, New World! Sweet land, my land!  
I come to-day, as first I came.  
The sea is swift, the sky is flame.  
My low song sings thy nameless name.  
Lovers who love, ye understand!  
O sweetest world! O sweetest land!

## OPPORTUNITY.



DO not know if, climbing some steep hill  
Through fragrant wooded pass, this glimpse  
I bought ;

Or whether in some midday I was caught  
To upper air, where visions of God's will  
In pictures to our quickened sense fulfil  
His word. But this I saw :

A path I sought  
Through wall of rock. No human fingers wrought  
The golden gates which opened, sudden, still,  
And wide. My fear was hushed by my delight.  
Surpassing fair the lands ; my path lay plain ;  
Alas ! so spell-bound, feasting on the sight,  
I paused, that I but reached the threshold bright,  
When, swinging swift, the golden gates again  
Were rocky walls, by which I wept in vain !

## WHEN THE BABY DIED.

## I.



WHEN the baby died,  
On every side  
White lilies and blue violets were strown ;  
Unreasoning, the mother's heart made  
moan :

“Who counted all these flowers which have grown  
Unhindered in their bloom?  
Was there not room,  
O Earth, and God, couldst thou not care  
For mine a little longer? Fare  
Thy way, O Earth! All life, all death  
For me ceased with my baby's breath;  
All Heaven I forget or doubt.  
Within, without,  
Is idle chance, more pitiless than law.”  
And that was all the mother saw.

## II.

When the baby died,  
On every side  
Rose strangers' voices, hard and harsh and loud.  
The baby was not wrapped in any shroud.  
The mother made no sound. Her head was bowed  
That men's eyes might not see  
Her misery;  
But in her bitter heart she said,  
“Ah me! 't is well that he is dead,  
My boy for whom there was no food.  
If there were God, and God were good,  
All human hearts at least might keep  
The right to weep  
Their dead. There is no God, but cruel law.”  
And that was all the mother saw.

## III.

When the baby died,  
 On every side  
 Swift angels came in shining, singing bands,  
 And bore the little one, with gentle hands,  
 Into the sunshine of the spirit lands.  
 And Christ the Shepherd said,  
 "Let them be led  
 In gardens nearest to the earth.  
 One mother weepeth over birth,  
 Another weepeth over death;  
 In vain all Heaven answereth.  
 Laughs from the little ones may reach  
 Their ears, and teach  
 Them what, so blind with tears, they never saw, —  
 That of all life, all death, God's love is law."

## "OLD LAMPS FOR NEW."



SOUL! wert thou a poor maid-servant,  
 weak  
 And foolish, and unknowing how the walls  
 Of shining stones and silver, and fine gold,  
 Which made our dwelling glorious, our life  
 Assured, were built, that thou must spring at call  
 Of our most deadly foe, lured by the sound



And glitter of his hollow brass, and give  
 Into his treacherous hands our all ?

And now

For thee and me remaineth nothing more,  
 But cold and hunger and the desert !

Soul,

Rise up and follow him, and tarry not,  
 Nor dare to call thy life thine own, until  
 Thou hast waylaid him sitting at his feast,  
 And torn our talisman from off his breast !

## FEAST.



OR days when guests unbidden  
 Walk in my sun,  
 With steps that roam unhidden,  
 And overrun

My vines and flowers, and hands  
 That rob on all my lands, —  
 For such days, still there stands  
 One banquet, one !

One banquet which, spread under  
 A magic mist,  
 I taste, until they wonder  
 What light has kissed  
 My eyes, and where the grapes  
 Have hung, whose red escapes  
 In mounting, mantling shapes,  
 And heats my wrist.

Crowned with its rosy flowers,  
    Pouring its wine,  
Glide faithful ghosts of hours  
    Long dead : no sign  
They show of death, or chill,  
But glowing, smiling still,  
Love's utmost joy fulfil  
    At word of mine.

And ringeth through my garden,  
    The tireless pace  
Of silver-mailed warden,  
    With eastward face,  
Who calmly bides the night,  
And in each first, red light,  
Reads prophecy aright  
    Of that day's grace,

When guests that are unbidden  
    Shall all have ceased ;  
And thy dear arms unhidden,  
    My love, my priest,  
Shall hold me while the hours  
That were, and are, fling flowers,  
And Hope, the warden, pours  
    Wine for our feast.



## TWO SUNDAYS.

## I.



BABY, alone, in a lowly door,  
Which climbing woodbine made still lower,  
Sat playing with lilies in the sun.  
The loud church-bells had just begun ;

The kitten pounced in the sparkling grass  
At stealthy spiders that tried to pass ;  
The big watch-dog kept a threatening eye  
On me, as I lingered, walking by.

The lilies grew high, and she reached up  
On tiny tiptoes to each gold cup ;  
And laughed aloud, and talked, and clapped  
Her small, brown hands, as the tough stems snapped.  
And flowers fell till the broad hearthstone  
Was covered, and only the topmost one  
Of the lilies left. In sobered glee  
She said to herself, " That 's older than me ! "

## II.

Two strong men through the lowly door,  
With uneven steps, the baby bore ;  
They had set the bier on the lily bed ;  
The lily she left was crushed and dead.  
The slow, sad bells had just begun,

The kitten crouched, afraid, in the sun ;  
 And the poor watch-dog, in bewildered pain,  
 Took no notice of me as I joined the train.

### SHOWBREAD.



PAST imaged pillars, wrought of fir and palm,  
 Past bright pomegranates, swinging on their  
                   chain,  
 And bars of Tyrian cedar, overlain  
 With gold, and past the molten sea whose calm  
 Waves drink the offerings of spice and balm,  
 Lit by the seven sacred lamps whose rain  
 Of fragrant fire the almond bowls detain,  
 Past clear-eyed cherubim, without alarm,  
 And into shadow of the mercy-seat  
 We pressed.

                  No priest with onyx-stones to meet  
 Us there ! Alone our hunger, face to face  
 With God, ate of the showbread, sacred, sweet ;  
 And listening, heard these words of heavenly grace,—  
 “One greater than the temple fills this place.”



TIDES.



PATIENT shore, that canst not go to meet  
Thy love, the restless sea, how comfortest  
Thou all thy loneliness? Art thou at rest,  
When, loosing his strong arms from round  
thy feet,

He turns away? Know'st thou, however sweet  
That other shore may be, that to thy breast  
He must return? And when in sterner test  
He folds thee to a heart which does not beat,  
Wraps thee in ice, and gives no smile, no kiss,  
To break long wintry days, still dost thou miss  
Naught from thy trust? Still wait, unfaltering,  
The higher, warmer waves which leap in spring?  
O sweet, wise shore, to be so satisfied!  
O heart, learn from the shore! Love has a tide!

TRIBUTE.

R. W. E.



MIDWAY in summer, face to face, a king  
I met. No king so gentle and so wise.  
He calls no man his subject; but his eyes,  
In midst of benediction, questioning,  
Each soul compel. A first-fruits offering

Each soul must owe to him whose fair land lies  
 Wherever God has his. No white dove flies  
 Too white, no wine too red and rich, to bring.  
 With sudden penitence for all her waste,  
 My soul to yield her scanty hoards made haste,  
 When lo ! they shrank and failed me in that need,  
 Like wizard's gold, by worthless dust replaced.  
 My speechless grief, the king, with tender heed,  
 Thus soothed : " These ashes sow. They are true  
 seed."

O king ! in other summer may I stand  
 Before thee yet, the full ear in my hand !

### "ALMS AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE."



H, how shall we, lame from the mother's  
 womb,  
 The temple enter ! Beautiful in vain  
 For us, the gate, where we, in double pain,  
 Of suffering and of loss, can find no room ;  
 Whose whiteness only makes our outer gloom  
 The blacker, and whose shining steps, more plain  
 Than words, mock cripples weeping to attain  
 The inner courts, where censers, sweet perfume,  
 And music fill the air !

O sinful fear !

Dare not to doubt. Our helplessness laid near  
 That gate, is safe ; our faith without alarms  
 Can wait ; the good apostles will appear ;

Our crippled beggary, made rich by alms  
Of God, shall leap and praise, in grateful psalms.

## CORONATION.



At the king's gate the subtle noon  
Wove filmy yellow nets of sun ;  
Into the drowsy snare too soon  
The guards fell one by one.

Through the king's gate, unquestioned then,  
A beggar went, and laughed, " This brings  
Me chance, at last, to see if men  
Fare better, being kings."

The king sat bowed beneath his crown,  
Propping his face with listless hand ;  
Watching the hour-glass sifting down  
Too slow its shining sand.

" Poor man, what wouldst thou have of me ? "  
The beggar turned, and, pitying,  
Replied, like one in dream, " Of thee,  
Nothing. I want the king."

Uprose the king, and from his head  
Shook off the crown and threw it by.  
" O man, thou must have known," he said,  
" A greater king than I."

Through all the gates, unquestioned then,  
Went king and beggar hand in hand.  
Whispered the king, " Shall I know when  
Before *his* throne I stand ? "

The beggar laughed. Free winds in haste  
Were wiping from the king's hot brow  
The crimson lines the crown had traced.  
" This is his presence now."

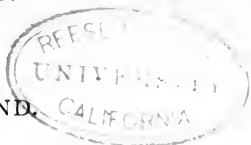
At the kings's gate, the crafty noon  
Unwove its yellow nets of sun ;  
Out of their sleep in terror soon  
The guards waked one by one.

" Ho here ! Ho there ! Has no man seen  
The king ? " The cry ran to and fro ;  
Beggar and king, they laughed, I ween,  
The laugh that free men know.

On the king's gate the moss grew gray ;  
The king came not. They called him dead ;  
And made his eldest son one day  
Slave in his father's stead.







MY NEW FRIEND.



SHALLOW voice said, bitterly, "New friend !"

As if the old alone were true, and, born  
Of sudden freak, the new deserved but  
scorn

And deep distrust.

                                If love could condescend,  
What scorn in turn ! Do men old garments mend  
With new ? And put the new wine, red at morn,  
Into the last year's bottles, thin and worn ?  
But love and loving need not to defend  
Themselves. The new is older than the old ;  
And newest friend is oldest friend in this,  
That, waiting him, we longest grieved to miss  
One thing we sought.

                                I think when we behold  
Full Heaven, we say not, " Why was this not told ? "  
But, " Ah ! For years we 've waited for this bliss ! "



## ASTERS AND GOLDEN ROD.



KNOW the lands are lit  
With all the autumn blaze of Golden Rod ;  
And everywhere the Purple Asters nod  
And bend and wave and flit.

But when the names I hear,  
I never picture how their pageant lies  
Spread out in tender stateliness of guise,  
The fairest of the year.

I only see one nook,  
A wooded nook — half sun, half shade —  
Where one I love his footsteps sudden stayed,  
And whispered, “ Darling, look ! ”

Two oak leaves, vivid green,  
Hung low among the ferns, and parted wide ;  
While purple Aster Stars, close side by side,  
Like faces peered between.

Like maiden faces set  
In vine-wreathed window, waiting shy and glad  
For joys whose dim, mysterious promise had  
But promise been, as yet.

And, like proud lovers bent,  
In regal courtesy, as kings might woo,  
Tall Golden Rods, bareheaded in the dew,  
Above the Asters leant.

Ah, me ! Lands will be lit  
With every autumn's blaze of Golden Rod,  
And purple Asters everywhere will nod  
And bend and wave and flit ;

Until, like ripened seed,  
This little earth itself, some noon, shall float  
Off into space, a tiny shining mote,  
Which none but God will heed ;

But never more will be  
Sweet Asters peering through that branch of oak  
To hear such precious words as dear lips spoke  
That sunny day to me.

## TWO LOVES.



LOVE beckoned me to come more near,  
And wait, two women's songs to hear :  
The songs ran sweet, the songs ran clear ;  
It seemed they never could be done.

One woman sat and sang in shade,  
Her still hands on her bosom laid ;  
The other sat and sang in sun.

"I love my love," the one song said,  
"Because he lifts such kingly head,  
And walks with such a kingly tread,

That men kneel down, and men confess ;  
And women, in soft, sad surprise,  
Acknowledge, by their longing eyes,  
His beauty and his goodliness.

“ His glory is my soul’s estate ;  
Breathless with love I watch and wait  
The hours of his triumphant fate,  
Knowing that far the greater part  
Of all his joy in all his fame  
Surrenders to my whispered name  
In secret places of his heart.

“ And oh ! I love my love again  
With love incredulous of pain,  
Because I know my beauty’s chain  
Binds him so sure, binds him so fast.  
I know there is not one swift bliss  
Which men may know, that he can miss,  
Or say of it that it is past.”

This was her song, who sat in sun ;  
It seemed it never would be done,  
Unless its joy should all outrun  
Slow speech, and fall of its own weight ;  
As fountains their sweet source recall,  
And, pausing sudden, break and fall,  
In murmur inarticulate.

The other song, more soft, more low,  
Out of the shade came floating slow,  
As autumn leaves swim to and fro

In golden seas of sunny air.  
Her meek hands on her bosom laid,  
Sign of the cross unwitting made ;  
The woman was not young nor fair.

“ I love my love,” the low song said,  
Because his noble, kingly head  
Is bowed, while, with most patient tread,  
He walks hard paths he did not choose,  
Smiling where other men would grieve,  
Heart-glad if other men receive  
Their fill of joys which he must lose.

“ I see each failure he must make,  
Each step he cannot but mistake ;  
And, weeping for his soul’s dear sake,  
I set my faith with love’s own seal, —  
Token of all which he might be,  
Token of all he is to me,  
As God and my own heart reveal.

“ And oh ! I love my love again,  
With love which is as strong as pain,  
Because I know that by the chain  
Of beauty’s bond I cannot bind ;  
The sweetest things which make men’s bliss,  
In loving me, my love must miss,  
In loving me, he cannot find.

“ So, fearing lest I may not feed  
Always his utmost want and need,  
In trust for her who can succeed

Where I must fail, his love's estate  
I solemn hold. Its rightful heir,  
A woman younger and more fair,  
Loving my love, I bide and wait."

This was her song, who sat in shade,  
Her meek hands on her bosom laid,  
Sign of the cross unwitting made ;  
She was not young, she was not fair :  
The sad notes floated sweet and slow,  
As autumn leaves swim to and fro  
On golden seas of sunny air.

"O Love !" I said, "which loveth best ?  
O Love, dear Love ! which wins thy rest ?"  
But Love was gone ; and, in the west,  
The sun, which gave one woman sun,  
And gave the other woman shade,  
Sank down ; on each the cold night laid  
Its silence, and each song was done.



## THE GOOD SHEPHERD.



ATE at night I saw the shepherd  
Toiling slow along the hill,  
With a smile of joy and patience,  
Facing night winds strong and chill.  
In his arms and in his bosom  
Lay the lambs content and still.

When the day broke, from the valley  
I looked up and saw no more  
Of the patient, smiling shepherd  
I had seen the night before ;  
But new mounds along the hillside  
Lay in sunshine, frozen hoar !



## LOVE'S FULFILLING.



LOVE is weak  
Which counts the answers and the  
gains,  
Weighs all the losses and the pains,  
And eagerly each fond word drains  
A joy to seek.

When Love is strong,  
It never tarries to take heed,  
Or know if its return exceed  
Its gift ; in its sweet haste no greed,  
No strifes belong.

It hardly asks  
If it be loved at all ; to take  
So barren seems, when it can make  
Such bliss, for the beloved sake,  
Of bitter tasks.

Its ecstasy  
Could find hard death so beauteous,  
It sees through tears how Christ loved us,  
And speaks, in saying " I love thus,"  
No blasphemy.

So much we miss  
If love is weak, so much we gain



If love is strong, God thinks no pain  
Too sharp or lasting to ordain  
To teach us this.

## WOODED.

## I.



WITH voice all confident, I knelt and cried,  
“ Behold me at thy feet, O darling queen !  
I kiss, round lowest hem, thy robe of  
green ;

In all thy temples I have prophesied,  
And cast out devils in thy name. Confide  
In me. Lift up the veil that hangs between  
My eyes and thy dear face. Tell me what mean  
The voices of thy people.”

Far and wide  
The lovely queen’s sweet kingdoms lie. I found  
My way to follow her to utmost bound  
Of all ; and listened, listened, nights and days,  
To every smallest sound on her highways ;  
But could not once her golden sceptre reach,  
Nor win the secret of her people’s speech.



## WON.

## II.



EARIED at last, and sad, I cried, "Refuse  
Me what thou wilt, my queen! At thy  
dear feet !

Henceforth I lie and sleep, and dream, and  
eat

Thy locusts and wild honey. Thou mayst choose,  
Perhaps, that I the latchet of thy shoes  
One day unfasten. Ever incomplete  
Leave my desire, too bold, to see thy sweet,  
Unveiled face ; to know what words they use  
Who serve around thy throne."

Lo! as I lay,

In such surrender, on that summer day,  
And sought not, stirred not, came the radiant queen,  
Sweeping me with her robe of leafy green,  
And kissed me everywhere that kiss could go ;  
While all her royal train I longed to know,  
The swallow leading, crowded up to teach  
Me all the secrets of their song and speech.



## ARIADNE'S FAREWELL.



HE daughter of a king, how should I know  
That there were tinsels wearing face of gold,  
And worthless glass, which in the sunlight's  
hold

Could shameless answer back my diamond's glow  
With cheat of kindred fire? The currents slow,  
And deep, and strong, and stainless, which had rolled  
Through royal veins for ages, what had told  
To them, that hasty heat and lie could show  
As quick and warm a red as theirs?

Go free!

The sun is breaking on the sea's blue shield  
Its golden lances; by their gleam I see  
Thy ship's white sails. Go free, if scorn can yield  
Thee freedom!

Then, alone, my love and I, —  
We both are royal; we know how to die.

## THOUGHT.



MESSENGER, art thou the king, or I?  
Thou dalliest outside the palace gate  
Till on thine idle armor lie the late  
And heavy dews: the morn's bright, scorn-  
ful eye

Reminds thee; then, in subtle mockery,

Thou smilest at the window where I wait,  
Who bade thee ride for life. In empty state  
My days go on, while false hours prophesy  
Thy quick return ; at last, in sad despair,  
I cease to bid thee, leave thee free as air ;  
When lo, thou stand'st before me glad and fleet,  
And lay'st undreamed-of treasures at my feet.  
Ah ! messenger, thy royal blood to buy,  
I am too poor. Thou art the king, not I.

## MORDECAI.



MAKE friends with him ! He is of royal line,  
Although he sits in rags. Not all of thine  
Array of splendor, pomp of high estate,  
Can buy him from his place within the gate,  
The king's gate of thy happiness, where he,  
Yes, even he, the Jew, remaineth free,  
Never obeisance making, never scorn  
Betraying of thy silver and new-born  
Delight. Make friends with him, for unawares  
The charmed secret of thy joys he bears ;  
Be glad, so long as his black sackcloth, late  
And early, thwarts thy sun ; for if in hate  
Thou plottest for his blood, thy own death-cry,  
Not his, comes from the gallows, cubits high.

## LOCUSTS AND WILD HONEY.



HOSPITABLE wilderness,  
I know thy secret sign ;  
All human welcome seemeth less  
To me than thine.

Such messengers to show me where  
Is water for my feet ;  
Such perfume poured upon my hair,  
Costly and sweet.

Such couch, such canopy, such floor,  
Such royal banquet spread ;  
Such music through the open door,  
So little said.

So much bestowed and understood,  
Such flavored courtesy,  
And only kings of unmixed blood  
For company.

Such rhythmic tales of ancient lores,  
Of sweet and hidden things,  
Rehearsed by sacred troubadours  
On tireless wings.

Such secrets of dominion set  
Unstinted for my choice,

Such mysteries, unuttered yet,  
Waiting a voice.

O hospitable wilderness,  
For thee I long and pine ;  
All human welcome seemeth less  
To me than thine.

### A MOTHER'S FAREWELL TO A VOYAGER.

"—— sends love and good-by. She thinks she sees the four quarters of the globe when she looks into the faces of her four children. November 2, 1868."



SAIL east, sail west, O wanderer,  
In east, in west, you cannot see  
Such suns as rise and set in these  
Four little faces round my knee.

Blue as the north my first-born's eyes ;  
Her yellow hair hides brow of snow ;  
Like conquerors from the North she brought  
The sweet subjection mothers know.

Glad and sad, and changed in an hour,  
My next girl's face is tropic sea,  
Where laden winds, whose secret none  
Can tell, sweep on unceasingly.

Grave and searching, with hidden fire,  
 My black-eyed boy kneels like a priest ;  
 I know that, looking where he looks,  
 We shall see the "Star in the East."

No name as yet my baby has,  
 Her rosy hands are just uncurled ;  
 But with wet eyes we kiss her cheeks,  
 And thank God for our sweet "new world."

Sail east, sail west, dear wanderer !  
 God cares for you and cares for me ;  
 He knows for which of us 't was best  
 To stay with children round her knee.

STEAMSHIP CHINA, November 12, 1868.

"DROPPED DEAD."



ALL royal strengths in life, until the end,  
 Will bear themselves still royally. Degrees  
 Of dying they know not : the muddy lees  
 They will not drink : no man shall see  
 them bend

Or slacken in the storm : no man can lend  
 To them. Those feeble souls who crouch on knees  
 That fail, and cling to shadows of lost ease,  
 Death tortures. But, as kings to kings may send,  
 He challenges the strong.

Such death as this

O'ertakes great love ; a lesser love will miss  
 Such stroke ; may dwindle painfully away,  
 And fade, and simply cease to breathe, some day.  
 But great loves, to the last, have pulses red ;  
 All great loves that have ever died dropped dead.

### PRESENCE.



NAMELESS thing ! which art and art not ;  
 spell

Whose bond can bind the powers of the air,  
 Compelling them thy face to hide or bear.

O voice ! which, bringing not the faintest swell  
 Of sound, canst in the air so crowd and dwell  
 That all sounds die. O sight ! which needst no share  
 Of sun, which sav'st blind eyes from their despair,  
 O touch ! which dost not touch, and yet canst tell  
 To waiting flesh, by thy caress complete,  
 The whole of love, till veins grow red with heat ;  
 O life of life ! to which graves are not girt  
 With terror, and all death can bring no hurt.  
 O mystery of blessing ! never lift  
 Thy veil ! our one inalienable gift !



## POLAR DAYS.



S some poor piteous Lapp., who under firs  
Which bend and break with load of arctic  
snows

Has crept and crouched to watch when  
crimson glows

Begin, feels in his veins the thrilling stir  
Of warmer life, e'en while his fear deters  
His trust; and when the orange turns to rose  
In vain, and widening to the westward goes  
The ruddy beam and fades, heartsick defers  
His hope, and shivers through one more long night  
Of sunless day; —

So watching, one by one,  
The faintest glimmers of the morn's gray light,  
The sleepless exiled heart waits for the bright  
Full day, and hopes till all its hours are done,  
That the next one will bring its love, its sun.

## TRUTH.



TRUTH, art thou relentless? Wilt thou  
rest

Never? From solitude to solitude  
Eternally wilt thou escape? Thy good

And beauty luring us to fatal quest,  
Foredoomed to endless loss?

O royal guest

Of Nature's centuries, no spot so rude,  
 So void, thy secret cannot there elude  
 Our grasp ; no thing too subtle to attest  
 Her royal sheltering ; from spheres to spheres  
 Of light, through the incalculable years ;  
 From force to force, through rock, through sound,  
     through flame,  
 Our worship wrests but echo of thy name,  
 And builds at last, with patient stone, and sod,  
 And tears, its altar "to the unknown God."

### HER EYES.



HAT they are brown, no man will dare to  
     say

He knows. And yet I think that no man's  
     look

Ever those depths of light and shade forsook,  
 Until their gentle pain warned him away.  
 Of all sweet things I know but one which may  
 Be likened to her eyes.

When, in deep nook

Of some green field, the water of a brook  
 Makes lingering, whirling eddy in its way,  
 Round soft drowned leaves ; and in a flash of sun  
 They turn to gold, until the ripples run

Now brown, now yellow, changing as by some  
Swift spell.

I know not with what body come  
The saints. But this I know, my Paradise  
Will mean the resurrection of her eyes.

## THE WALL-FLOWER OF THE RUINS OF ROME.



GOLDEN-WINGED, on guard at crum-  
bled gate

And fallen wall of emperors and kings,  
Whose very names are now forgotten things,

Thou standest here, in faithfulness to wait  
The centuries through, and of the ancient state  
Keep up the semblance. Never footstep rings  
Across the stones ; and yet, if sun but flings  
One ray, a gleam, like gleam of burnished plate  
On mailed men, thy hands have lit, and sent  
Along the gray and tottering battlement,  
And flung out yellow banners, pricked with red,  
Which need not shame a royal house to spread.  
Ah, golden-winged, the whole of thy deep spell  
I cannot fathom, and thou wilt not tell.

## SHADOWS OF BIRDS.



N darkened air, alone with pain,  
I lay. Like links of heavy chain  
The minutes sounded, measuring day,  
And slipping lifelessly away.

Sudden across my silent room  
A shadow darker than its gloom  
Swept swift ; a shadow slim and small  
Which poised and darted on the wall,  
And vanished quickly as it came ;  
A shadow, yet it lit like flame ;  
A shadow, yet I heard it sing,  
And heard the rustle of its wing,  
Till every pulse with joy was stirred ;  
It was the shadow of a bird !

Only the shadow ! Yet it made  
Full summer everywhere it strayed ;  
And every bird I ever knew  
Back and forth in the summer flew ;  
And breezes wafted over me  
The scent of every flower and tree ;  
Till I forgot the pain and gloom  
And silence of my darkened room.  
Now, in the glorious open air,  
I watch the birds fly here and there ;

And wonder, as each swift wing cleaves  
The sky, if some poor soul that grieves  
In lonely, darkened, silent walls  
Will catch the shadow as it falls !

## GLIMPSES.



AS when on some great mountain-peak we  
stand,

In breathless awe beneath its dome of sky,  
Whose multiplied horizons seem to lie  
Beyond the bounds of earthly sea and land,  
We find the circled space too vast, too grand,  
And soothe our thoughts with restful memory  
Of sudden sunlit glimpses we passed by  
Too quickly, in our feverish demand  
To reach the height, —

So, darling, when the brink  
Of highest heaven we reach at last, I think  
Even that great gladness will grow yet more glad,  
As we, with eyes that are no longer sad,  
Look back, while Life's horizons slowly sink,  
To some swift moments which on earth we had.



## TO A. C. L. B.



THY house hath gracious freedom, like the  
 air  
 Of open fields ; its silence hath a speech  
 Of royal welcome to the friends who reach  
 Its threshold, and its upper chambers bear,  
 Above their doors such spells, that, entering there  
 And laying off the dusty garments, each  
 Soul whispers to herself : "'T were like a breach  
 Of reverence in a temple could I dare  
 Here speak untruth, here wrong my inmost thought.  
 Here I grow strong and pure ; here I may yield,  
 Without shamefacedness, the little brought  
 From out my poorer life, and stand revealed,  
 And glad, and trusting, in the sweet and rare  
 And tender presence which hath filled this air."

## SNOW-DROPS IN ITALY.



LOYAL vestals in this land of sun,  
 Your white cheeks flush not, and your virgin  
 eyes  
 Vouchsafe no lifted look. In vain the skies  
 Are red and pale with passion ; swift clouds run  
 And beckon ; warm winds call ; long days are done  
 And nights are spent, and still by no surprise,  
 No lure can ye be tempted !

O, where lies  
 The spell by which your gentleness can shun  
 These heats ? Is it your hidden zone of gold ?  
 Or in the emerald whose glimmers show,  
 Scarce show, beneath your white robes' inner fold ?  
 Vain question ! Still your calm bright peace ye hold ;  
 And yet ye set my pulses all aglow  
 With loyalty like yours to lands of snow.

## DISTANCE.



SUBTILE secret of the air,  
 Making the things that are not, fair  
 Beyond the things that we can reach  
 And name with names of clumsy speech ;  
 By shadow-worlds of purple haze  
 The sunniest of sunny days  
 Outweighing in our hearts' delight ;  
 Opening the eyes of blinded sight ;  
 Holding an echo in such hold,  
 Bidding a hope such wings unfold,  
 That present sounds and sights between  
 Can come and go, unheard, unseen, —  
 O subtile secret of the air,  
 Heaven itself is heavenly fair  
 By help of thee ! The saints' good days  
 Are good, because the good Lord lays  
 No bound of shore along the sea  
 Of beautiful Eternity.

## WHEN THE KINGS COME.



WHEN the Kings come to royal hunting seats  
To find the royal joys of summer days,  
The servants on the lofty watch-tower raise  
A banner, whose swift token warning greets  
The country. Threatening stern, an armed man  
meets

Each stranger, who, by pleasant forest-ways,  
All unawares, has rambled till he strays  
Too close to paths where, in the noonday heats,  
The King, uncrowned, lies down to sleep. Such law  
As this the human soul sets heart and face  
And hand, when once its King has come. In awe,  
And gladness too, all men behold what grace  
Such royal presence to the eye can bring,  
And how the heart and hand can guard their King.

## COMING ACROSS.



VERY sail is full set, and the sky  
And the sea blaze with light,  
And the moon mid her virgins glides on  
As St. Ursula might;  
And the throb of the pulse never stops,  
In the heart of the ship,



As her measures of water and fire  
 She drinks down at a sip.  
 Yet I never can think, as I lie,  
 And so wearily toss,  
 That by saint, or by star, or by ship,  
 I am coming across ;

But by light which I know in dear eyes  
 That are bent on the sea,  
 And the touch I remember of hands  
 That are waiting for me.  
 By the light of the eyes I could come,  
 If the stars should all fail ;  
 And I think, if the ship should go down,  
 That the hands would prevail.  
 Ah ! my darlings, you never will know  
 How I pined in the loss  
 Of you all, and how breathless and glad  
 I am coming across.

STEAMSHIP RUSSIA, January 22, 1870.

## THE TEACHER.



HE people listened, with short, indrawn  
 breath,  
 And eyes that were too steady set for tears.  
 This one man's speech rolled off great loads  
 of fears

From every heart, as sunlight scattereth

The clouds ; hard doubts, which had been born of  
death,

Shone out as rain-drops shine when rainbow clears  
The air. "O teacher," then I said, "thy years,  
Are they not joy ? Each word that issueth  
From out thy lips, doth it return to bless  
Thy own heart many fold ?"

With weariness  
Of tone he answered, and almost with scorn,  
"I am, of all, most lone in loneliness ;  
I starve with hunger treading out their corn ;  
I die of travail while their souls are born."

## DECORATION DAY.

### I.



HE Eastern wizards do a wondrous thing,  
Which travellers, having seen, scarce dare  
to tell :

Dropping a seed in earth, by subtle spell  
Of hidden heat they force the germ to spring  
To instant life and growth ; no faltering  
'Twixt leaf and flower and fruit ; they rise and swell  
To perfect shape and size, as if there fell  
Upon them all which seasons hold and bring.  
But Love far greater magic shows to-day :  
Lifting its feeble hands, which can but reach

The hands-breadth up, it stretches all the way  
From earth to heaven, and, triumphant, each  
Sweet wilting blossom sets, before it dies,  
Full in the sight of smiling angels' eyes.

## II.

But, ah ! the graves which no man names or knows ;  
Uncounted graves, which never can be found ;  
Graves of the precious " missing," where no sound  
Of tender weeping will be heard, where goes  
No loving step of kindred. O, how flows  
And yearns our thought to them ! More holy ground  
Of graves than this, we say, is that whose bound  
Is secret till eternity disclose  
Its sign.

But Nature knows her wilderness ;  
There are no " missing " in her numbered ways.  
In her great heart is no forgetfulness.  
Each grave she keeps she will adorn, caress.  
We cannot lay such wreaths as Summer lays,  
And all her days are Decoration Days !



## A THIRTEENTH-CENTURY PARABLE.



WHEN good Saint Louis reigned in France as  
king,

And William, Bishop of Paris, ministering  
To all the churches, kept them pure and glad,

There came one day a learned man, who had  
Journeyed from distant provinces to find  
His Bishop and unload his burdened mind.  
Entering the Bishop's presence, he began  
To speak: but sobs choked all his voice; tears ran  
Like rain from out his eyes, and no words came  
To tell his grief. Then said the Bishop:

“Shame

Not thyself so deeply, Master: no man  
So sins but that the gracious Jesus can  
Forgive an hundred thousand fold more guilt  
Than his, and cleanse it by his dear blood spilt.”

“I tell you, Sire,” the Master said, “I must  
Forever weep: I am accursed. I trust  
Not in the holy altar-sacrament,  
As taught to us; I cannot but dissent  
From all the Church doth say of it: and yet  
I know my doubts are but temptations set  
By Satan's self, to sink my soul to hell.  
O Sire, I am a wretched Infidel.”

Then said the gentle Bishop:

“This one thing

Tell me, O honest Master, do they bring

Thee pleasure, these dark doubts ?”

“O, no ! my Sire,”

The weeping Master said : “they burn like fire  
Within my bones.”

“And could thy lips to speak  
Thy doubts be bought by gold ? And would'st thou  
seek  
To shake a brother's faith ?”

“I, Sire !” exclaimed  
The Master. “I ! I would be bruised and maimed,  
And torn from limb to limb, ere I would say  
Such words.”

Then said the Bishop, smiling : “Lay  
Aside now for a space thy grief and fear,  
And listen. Soon my meaning will appear,  
Though it be strangely hid at first below  
My words.

Thou know'st that war is raging now  
Between the King of England and of France ;  
Thou know'st that of our castles greatest chance  
Of loss has La Rochelle, there in Poitou,  
Lying so near the border. If to you  
The King had given La Rochelle to hold,  
And unto me — no less true man and bold,  
Perhaps — the Castle of Laon to keep,  
Far in the heart of France, where I might sleep  
All day, all night, unharmed, if so I chose, —  
So safe beyond the reach of all our foes  
Lies Laon, — when the war is ended, who  
Ought from the King to have the most thanks ?

You,

Who La Rochelle had saved by bloody fights,  
Or I, who spent in Laon peaceful nights ? ”  
“ In faith, Sire, I, who guarded La Rochelle ! ”  
The wondering Master cried.

“ So, then, I tell  
Thee,” said the Bishop, in most gentle tone,  
“ My heart is like the Castle of Laon.  
Temptations, doubts, cannot my soul assail.  
Therefore, I say that thou, who dost prevail  
Against such foes of Satan’s mustering,  
Art four times pleasing to the Heavenly King,  
Where I am once ; and thy good fortress, kept,  
Shall win thee glory such as saints have wept  
To win ! Go, joyful ! Put thy sorrow by.  
Thou art far dearer to the Lord than I.”  
Scarce dared the Master trust such words as these ;  
But silent, grateful, fell upon his knees  
Until the Bishop blessed him. Then he went  
Away in solemn wonder and content.

They lie in graves, the saints who knew this tale,  
The King, the Bishop, and the Seneschal,  
And he who doubted, — rest their souls in peace ! —  
And even mention of their names men cease  
To make. But, knowing all, as they must know,  
Of God, who roam his universes through,  
Untrammelled spirits, they could tell to men  
To-day no deeper truth than was told then,  
To cheer and comfort him who fighteth well  
To save a heart besieged like La Rochelle.

## FORM.



HIDDEN secret of all things !  
 Thy triumph, most triumphant, brings  
 No sound of syllable of name  
 To mark the law by which it came ;  
 The subtle point of difference,  
 Which made the joy of joy intense,  
 The grief of grief too great to bear,  
 Beauty than beauty's self more fair.

No skill does more, at best, than work  
 Blindly, in hope to find where lurk  
 Thy undiscovered charm and spell ;  
 No prophecies thine hour foretell ;  
 No hindrances thine hour avert ;  
 No purpose brings thee good or hurt ;  
 Thy life knows not of wish or will ;  
 Inherent growths thy growth fulfil.

No man dared say to curve, to line,  
 " Be beautiful, by word of mine !  
 I crown thee lovely on the earth !  
 I am thy Lord of life and birth."  
 Before all men the line, the curve,  
 Stood suddenly, and said :

" Preserve

What joy ye can. O blind of eye !  
 Behold us once before ye die ! "

O hidden secret of all things !  
 O kingdom earlier than kings !  
 Before earth was, yea, and before  
 The Heavens, Eternity forbore  
 All haste, waiting each sign and bond,  
 For seal of thee, to set beyond  
 All time's impatience the decree  
 And record of thy sovereignty ! ”

### MY HICKORY FIRE.



HELPLESS body of hickory tree,  
 What do I burn, in burning thee ?  
 Summers of sun, winters of snow,  
 Springs full of sap's resistless flow ;  
 All past year's joys of garnered fruits ;  
 All this year's purposed buds and shoots ;  
 Secrets of fields of upper air,  
 Secrets which stars and planets share ;  
 Light of such smiles as broad skies fling ;  
 Sound of such tunes as wild winds sing ;  
 Voices which told where gay birds dwelt,  
 Voices which told where lovers knelt ; —  
 O strong white body of hickory tree,  
 How dare I burn all these, in thee ?

But I too bring, as to a pyre,  
 Sweet things to feed thy funeral fire :  
 Memories waked by thy deep spell ;  
 Faces of fears and hopes which fell ;



Faces of darlings long since dead, —  
Smiles that they smiled, and words they said ;  
Like living shapes they come and go,  
Lit by the mounting flame's red glow.  
But sacredest of all, O tree,  
Thou hast the hour my love gave me.  
Only thy rhythmic silence stirred  
While his low-whispered tones I heard ;  
By thy last gleam of flickering light  
I saw his cheek turn red from white ;  
O cold gray ashes, side by side  
With yours, that hour's sweet pulses died !

But thou, brave tree, how do I know  
That through these fires thou dost not go  
As in old days the martyrs went  
Through fire which was a sacrament ?  
How do I know thou dost not wait  
In longing for thy next estate ? —  
Estate of higher, nobler place,  
Whose shapes no man can use or trace.  
How do I know, if I could reach  
The secret meaning of thy speech,  
But I thy song of praise should hear,  
Ringing triumphant, loud, and clear, —  
The waiting angels could discern,  
And token of thy heaven learn ?  
O glad, freed soul of hickory tree,  
Wherever thine eternity,  
Bear thou with thee that hour's dear name,  
Made pure, like thee, by rites of flame !

## REVENUES.



SMILE to hear the little kings  
When they count up their precious things,  
And send their vaunting lists abroad,  
Of what their kingdoms can afford.

One boasts his corn, and one his wine,  
And one his gold and silver fine ;  
One by an army, one by a fleet,  
Keeps neighbor kings beneath his feet ;  
One sets his claim to highest place  
On looms of silk and looms of lace ;  
And one shows pictures of old saints  
In lifelike tints of wondrous paints ;  
And one has quarries of white stone  
From which rare statue shapes have grown ;  
And so, by dint of wealth or grace,  
Striving to keep the highest place,  
They count and show their precious things,  
The little race of little kings.

“O little kings !” I long to say,  
“Who counts God’s revenues to-day ?  
Who knows on all the hills and coasts  
Names of the captains of his hosts ?  
What eye has seen the half of gold  
His smallest mine has in its hold ?  
What figures tell one summer’s cost  
Of fabrics which are torn and tost

To clothe his myriads of trees ?  
Who reckons, in the sounding seas,  
The shining corals, wrought and graved,  
With which his ocean floors are paved ?  
Who knows the numbers or the names  
Of colors in his sunset flames ?  
What table measures, marking weight,  
What chemistries can estimate  
One single banquet for his birds ?”  
Then, mocked by all which utmost words  
And utmost thoughts can frame or reach,  
My heart finds tears its only speech.  
In ecstasy, part joy, part pain,  
Where fear and wonder half restrain  
Love’s gratitude, I lay my ear  
Close to the ground, and listening hear  
This noiseless, ceaseless, boundless tide  
Of earth’s great wealth, on every side,  
Rolling and pouring up to break  
At feet of God, who will not take  
Nor keep among his heavenly things  
So much as tithe of all it brings ;  
But instant turns the costly wave,  
Gives back to earth all that it gave,  
Spends all his universe of power  
And pomp to deck one single hour  
Of time, and then in largess free,  
Unasked, bestows the hour on me.

## A BURIAL SERVICE.



O this burying  
We come alone, — you and I, — not with  
our dead,  
But with our dearest living ; O, could mortal tread  
Be unfaltering !

God knows how we love it,  
This we have come to bury ; the eyes smile, — life's  
best wine  
The hands hold out ! Darling, shall it be yours, or  
mine,  
To lay the first sod above it ?

But no decaying  
Can reach it in this sepulchre, whose stone  
Our hearts must make ! To an exceeding glory grown,  
This grief, outweighing,

Not even regretting,  
It will await us ! Thank God, not being sown  
In any dishonor, it will await its own,  
Never forgetting !

To Christ's protection  
Now let us leave it, — the tomb and the key ! He  
Will remember us, if there may ever be  
Resurrection !

## A PARABLE.



FAR in the wood I found a vine, so sweet  
 Of flower and leaf that, loving it, I stayed  
 To learn its secret. Thick around its feet  
 Grew thorny briars, and tangled saplings  
 made

On every side of it too dark a shade.  
 One tendril by a dead branch held. The rest  
 Were folded like proud arms upon its breast.

The rough wind beat it down ; it did not break,  
 But, lying low until the storm went by,  
 Lifted its head again. Still it would take  
 No help ; but, shaking off with scornful eye  
 The dust, rose slowly, looking to the sky,  
 Borne up by hidden forces of its own,  
 And stood again erect, a vine, alone

Far in the wood I whispered then, afraid  
 The question showed not all my love, " O vine,  
 Brave vine, so sweet and yet so strong, what made  
 It easy unto thee ? No sun can shine  
 To warm thee in this cold, unwholesome shade.  
 Why standest thou apart from all the rest,  
 Thy slender proud arms folded on thy breast ? "

Filling the wood, this subtle whisper then  
 My reverent listening heard :

“ My love, the Oak,  
Has died. Never before his name to men  
Who, idly questioning, passed by, I spoke.  
But thou, — thou lov’st like me ; thy secret woke  
My own. Thou know’st to a less lordly thing  
The tendrils torn from oaks will never cling.”

## FRIENDS.

TO

A. E. P.



WE rode a day, from east, from west,  
To meet. A year had done its best,  
By absence, and by loss of speech,  
To put beyond the other's reach  
Each heart and life ; but, drawing nigh,  
“ Ah ! it is you ! ” “ Yes, it is I ! ”  
We said ; and love had been blasphemed  
And slain in each had either deemed  
Need of more words, or joy more plain  
When eyes had looked in eyes again :  
Ah friendship, stronger in thy might  
Than time and space, as faith than sight !  
Rich festival with thy red wine  
My friend and I will keep in courts divine !

## THE ROYAL BEGGAR.



MARVEL strange! outside the palace  
doors,  
And begging humbly from the palace stores,  
He stands and waits ; and when a paltry  
crust

Is flung, he stoops and picks it from the dust,  
And, smiling through his tears, clasps to his breast  
The niggard boon ; and, for the moment blest  
And fed, is grateful, though the ruby wine  
And milk and honey which, by right divine,  
Are his, his only, and the crown of gold  
God wrought for him, are to his rightful hold  
Refused !

Ah Love, dear Love, nowhere on earth  
Wanders uncrowned thy peer of royal birth !  
Ah Love, great Love ! Denied, thrust out in vain,  
Kingly, though beggared ! Blest through all the pain !

## MARCH.



BENEATH the sheltering walls the thin snow  
clings, —  
Dead winter's skeleton, left bleaching,  
white,

Disjointed, crumbling, on unfriendly fields.  
The inky pools surrender tardily

At noon, to patient herds, a frosty drink  
 From jagged rims of ice ; a subtle red  
 Of life is kindling every twig and stalk  
 Of lowly meadow growths ; the willows wrap  
 Their stems in furry white ; the pines grow gray  
 A little in the biting wind ; midday  
 Brings tiny burrowed creatures, peeping out  
 Alert for sun.

Ah March ! we know thou art  
 Kind-hearted, spite of ugly looks and threats,  
 And, out of sight, art nursing April's violets !

## APRIL.



ROBINS call robins in tops of trees ;  
 Doves follow doves, with scarlet feet ;  
 Frolicking babies, sweeter than these,  
 Crowd green corners where highways  
 meet.

Violets stir and arbutus wakes,  
 Claytonia's rosy bells unfold ;  
 Dandelion through the meadow makes  
 A royal road, with seals of gold.

Golden and snowy and red the flowers,  
 Golden, snowy, and red in vain ;  
 Robins call robins through sad showers ;  
 The white dove's feet are wet with rain.



For April sobs while these are so glad,  
April weeps while these are so gay, —  
Weeps like a tired child who had,  
Playing with flowers, lost its way.

## MAY.



HE voice of one who goes before to make  
The paths of June more beautiful, is thine,  
Sweet May ! Without an envy of her crown  
And bridal ; patient stringing emeralds  
And shining rubies for the brows of birch  
And maple ; flinging garlands of pure white  
And pink, which to their bloom add prophecy ;  
Gold cups o'er-filling on a thousand hills  
And calling honey-bees ; out of their sleep  
The tiny summer harpers with bright wings  
Awaking, teaching them their notes for noon ; —  
O May, sweet-voiced one, going thus before,  
Forever June may pour her warm red wine  
Of life and passion, — sweeter days are thine !



## THE SIMPLE KING.



HE king, the royal, simple king,  
 Whom in bold lovingness I sing,  
 Will not be buried when he dies,  
 As kings are buried. Where he lies,  
 No regal monument will show ;  
 No worldly pilgrim-feet will go ;  
 No heraldry, with blazoned sign,  
 Will keep the record of his line.  
 No man will know his kingdom's bound ;  
 No man his subjects' grief will sound.  
 His crown will nōt lie low with him ;  
 His crown will never melt nor dim.

This king, this royal, simple king,  
 Whose kingliness I kneel to sing,  
 Looks on all other men with eyes  
 Which are as calm as suns that rise  
 Alike, and bring an equal gain  
 To just and unjust. Like soft rain  
 His gentle kindness, but deep  
 As waters, in which oceans keep  
 Their treasures. Silent, warm, and white  
 As mid-day is his love's great light ;  
 But in its faithful summer saves  
 For every smallest flower that waves  
 Such shelter that it cannot die  
 Nor droop, while love's fierce noons pass by.

This king, this royal, simple king,  
Whose kingliness I cannot sing,  
Speaks words which are decrees, because  
They come as questions, not as laws.  
Himself devoutest worshipper  
At Truth's great shrine, his least acts stir  
The people's hearts, as when of old  
The High Priest, lifting veil of gold,  
Came from the ark's most sacred place,  
And only by his shining face  
Revealed to them without that he  
Had seen the Godhead bodily.  
Men serve him ; but while they obey  
Feel no oppression in the sway.  
His royal hand is burdened too ;  
No load of theirs to him is new ;  
No sting or stigma in a bond  
To him whose vision looks beyond  
All names and shapes of numbered days,  
All accidents of human ways,  
And, superseding signs and shrifts  
Of all allegiances, lifts  
Service to Freedom's regal plane  
Beyond compulsion or disdain.

This king, this royal, simple king,  
Whose kingliness I love and sing,  
Has not much silver or much gold :  
Told as kings' treasures are told,  
Beggar's estate he must confess.  
But all the lavish wilderness

Sets state for him. Tall pine-trees bend ;  
Strange birds sing songs which never end.  
The sunset and the sunrise sweep  
Backward and forward swift, to keep  
Fresh glory round his pathway. Then,  
Of sudden men discover, when  
They journey thither by his side,  
What pomp and splendor are supplied  
By Nature's smallest, subtlest thing,  
To hail and crown the simple king.  
Yea ! and the dull and stony street,  
And walls within which rich men meet,  
Cities, and all they compass, grow  
Significant, when to and fro  
The simple king, unrecognized,  
Unenvious, and unsurprised,  
Walks smilingly, and as he treads  
Unconscious benediction spreads.

Ah ! king, thou royal, simple king !  
Not as by any grave I sing ;  
Neither by any present throne ;  
King crowned to-day, king who hast gone,  
In kingliness one and the same !  
The house runs not by race or name ;  
No day but sees, no land but knows ;  
The kingdom lasts, the kingdom grows ;  
God holds earth dearer and more dear,  
God's sons come nearer and more near.

## THE SINGER'S FRIENDS.



HE roamed the earth with lonely feet;  
No homestead lured him back;  
Lands are so full; life is so sweet;  
Such skies and suns forever meet  
To make each day's great joy complete;  
'Twas strange that he so much must lack.

'Twas stranger yet that joy could still  
His bosom overflow;  
That smallest things his soul could fill  
With ecstasy and song, whose thrill  
No pain could hinder or could chill,  
As lonely he went to and fro.

But ever if there came a day,  
Which on his joy and song  
So heavy load of sorrow lay  
That heart and voice could not obey,  
And feet refused the lonely way,  
So lonely, and so hard, and long,

It always chanced, — though chance is not,  
The word when God befriends, —  
That on such days to him was brought  
Echo from some old song, forgot,  
Which sudden made his lonely lot  
Seem cast for worthier, sweeter ends.

Some stranger whose sad eyes were wet  
With tears, would take his hands,  
Saying, "O Singer, my great debt  
To thee I never can forget.  
My grief in thy grief's words was set,  
And comforted forever stands."

Or else he heard, borne on the air  
Where merry music rang,  
Making the fair day still more fair,  
Lifting the burden off of care,  
Old words of his that did their share,  
While happy people laughed and sang.

Or else, — O, sacreddest of all,  
And sweetest recompense, —  
Love used his words, its love to call  
By name : of his dead joy, the thrall  
Waked live joy still, and could forestall  
Love's utmost passion's subtlest sense.

So when at last, in lonely grave,  
He laid his lonely head,  
No loving heart more tears need crave ;  
Nowhere more sacred grasses wave ;  
All human hearts to whom he gave  
Grieved like friends' hearts when he was dead.

## DOUBT.



HEY bade me cast the thing away,  
They pointed to my hands all bleeding,  
They listened not to all my pleading ;  
The thing I meant I could not say ;

I knew that I should rue the day  
If once I cast that thing away.

I grasped it firm, and bore the pain ;  
The thorny husks I stripped and scattered ;  
If I could reach its heart, what mattered  
If other men saw not my gain,  
Or even if I should be slain ?  
I knew the risks ; I chose the pain.

O, had I cast that thing away,  
I had not found what most I cherish,  
A faith without which I should perish, —  
The faith which, like a kernel, lay  
Hid in the husks which on that day  
My instinct would not throw away !



## FORGIVEN.



DREAMED so dear a dream of you last night !

I thought you came. I was so glad, so gay,  
I whispered, "Those were foolish words  
to say :

I meant them not. I cannot bear the sight  
Of your dear face. I cannot meet the light  
Of your dear eyes upon me. Sit, I pray, —  
Sit here beside me : turn your look away,  
And lay your cheek on mine." Till morning bright  
We sat so, and we did not speak. I knew  
All was forgiven ; so I nestled there [flew.  
With your arms round me. Swift the sweet hours  
At last I waked, and sought you everywhere.  
How long, dear, think you, that my glad cheek will  
Burn, — as it burns with your cheek's pressure still ?

## THIS SUMMER.



THOUGHT I knew all Summer knows,  
So many summers I had been  
Wed to Summer. Could I suppose  
One hidden beauty still lurked in  
Her days ? that she might still disclose  
New secrets, and new homage win ?

Could new looks flit across the skies ?  
Could water ripple one new sound ?



Could stranger bee or bird that flies  
With yet new languages be found,  
To bring me, to my glad surprise,  
Message from yet remoter bound ?

O sweet "this Summer !" Songs which sang  
Summer before no longer mean  
The whole of summer. Bells which rang  
But minutes have marked years between.  
Purple the grapes of Autumn hang :  
My sweet "this Summer" still is green.

"This Summer" still, — forgetting all  
Before and since and aye, — I say,  
And shall say, when the deep snows fall,  
And cold suns mark their shortest day.  
New calendar, my heart will call ;  
"This Summer" still ! Summer always !

And when God's next sweet world we reach,  
And the poor words we stammered here  
Are fast forgot, while angels teach  
Us spirit language quick and clear,  
Perhaps some words of earthly speech  
We still shall speak, and still hold dear.

And if some time in upper air  
On swiftest wings we sudden meet,  
And pause with answering smiles which share  
Our joy, I think that we shall greet  
Each other thus : "This world is fair ;  
But ah ! that Summer too was sweet !"

## TRYST.



OMEWHERE thou awaitest,  
And I, with lips unkissed,  
Weep that thus to latest  
Thou putttest off our tryst !

The golden bowls are broken,  
The silver cords untwine ;  
Almond flowers in token  
Have bloomed, — that I am thine !

Others who would fly thee  
In cowardly alarms,  
Who hate thee and deny thee,  
Thou foldest in thine arms !

How shall I entreat thee  
No longer to withhold ?  
I dare not go to meet thee,  
O lover, far and cold !

O lover, whose lips chilling  
So many lips have kissed,  
Come, even if unwilling,  
And keep thy solemn tryst !

## THE MAGIC ARMORY.



O man can shut the open door ;  
Strange hieroglyphs of mystic lore  
Are writ on it from beam to sill ;  
The gleams and shapes of weapons fill  
Its silent chambers : field and fray  
Of centuries have borne away  
Its armor to their victories,  
And yet to-day the armor lies  
Unstained and bright and whole and good,  
For each man's utmost hardihood.

All men go freely out and in,  
And choose their arms to fight and win ;  
But one man goes with silly hands,  
And helpless, halting, choosing stands,  
And from the glittering, deadly steels,  
Fits him with clumsy sword, and deals  
A feeble, witless, useless blow,  
Which hurts no friend and helps no foe.  
Close by his side his brother makes  
Swift choice, unerringly, and takes  
From those same chambers hilt and blade  
With which more magic sword is made  
Than that far-famed which armed the hand  
Of Lion-Heart in Eastern land.

So fight and fray the centuries,  
The right and truth with wrong and lies ;

So men go freely out and in,  
 And choose their arms, and lose and win ;  
 And none can shut the open door,  
 All writ with signs of mystic lore,  
 Where weapons stout and old and good  
 For each man's utmost hardihood  
 Lie ready, countless, priceless, free,  
 Within the magic armory.

## LIFTED OVER.



S tender mothers guiding baby steps,  
 When places come at which the tiny feet  
 Would trip, lift up the little ones in arms  
 Of love, and set them down beyond the  
                   harm,

So did Our Father watch the precious boy,  
 Led o'er the stones by me, who stumbled of  
 Myself, but strove to help my darling on :  
 He saw the sweet limbs faltering, and saw  
 Rough ways before us, where my arms would fail ;  
 So reached from heaven, and lifting the dear child,  
 Who smiled in leaving me, He put him down  
 Beyond all hurt, beyond my sight, and bade  
 Him wait for me ! Shall I not then be glad,  
 And, thanking God, press on to overtake ?

MY HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS.



T is so old, the date is dim ;  
I hear the wise man vexing him  
With effort vain to count and read,  
But to his words I give small heed,  
Except of pity that so late  
He sitteth wrangling in the gate,  
When he might come with me inside,  
And in such peace and plenty bide.  
The constant springs and summers thatch,  
With leaves that interlock and match,  
Such roof as keeps out fiercest sun  
And gentle rain, but one by one  
Lets in blue banner-gleams of sky  
As pomp of day goes marching by  
Under these roofs I lie whole days,  
Watching the steady household ways :  
Innumerable creatures come  
And go, and are far more at home  
Than I, who like dumb giant sit  
Baffled by all their work and wit.  
No smallest of them condescends  
To notice me ; their hidden ends  
They follow, and above, below,  
Across my bulky shape they go,  
With swift, sure feet, and subtle eyes,  
Too keen and cautious for surprise  
In vain I try their love to reach ;

Not one will give me trust or speech.  
No second look the furry bee  
Gives, as he bustles round, to me ;  
Before my eyes slim spiders take  
Their silken ladders out and make  
No halt, no secret, scaling where  
They like, and weaving scaffolds there ;  
The beaded ants prick out and in,  
Mysterious and dark and thin ;  
With glittering spears and gauzy mail  
Legions of insects dart and sail,  
Swift Bedouins of the pathless air,  
Finding rich plunder everywhere ;  
Sweet birds, with motion more serene  
Than stillest rest, soar up between  
The fleecy clouds, then, sinking slow,  
Light on my roof. I do not know  
That they are there till fluttering  
Low sounds, like the unravelling  
Of tight-knit web, their soft wings make,  
Unfurling further flight to take.  
All through my house is set out food,  
Ready and plenty, safe and good,  
In vessels made of cunning shapes,  
Whose liquid spicy sweet escapes  
By drops at brims of yellow bowls,  
Or tips of trumpets red as coals,  
Or cornucopias pink and white,  
By millions set in circles tight ;  
Red wine turned jelly, and in moulds  
Of pointed calyx laid on folds

Of velvet green ; fruit-grains of brown,  
Like dusty shower thickly strewn  
On underside of fronds, and hid  
Unless one lift the carven lid ;  
And many things which in my haste  
And ignorance I reckon waste,  
Unsightly and unclean, I find  
Are but delicious food, designed  
For travellers who come each day,  
And eat, and drink, and go their way.  
I am the only one who need  
Go hungry where so many feed ;  
My birthright of protection lost,  
Because of fathers' sins the cost  
Is counted in the children's blood :  
I starve where once I might have stood  
Content and strong as bird or bee,  
Feeding like them on flower or tree.  
When I have hunger, I must rise  
And seek the poisons I despise,  
Leaving untouched on every hand  
The sweet wild foods of air and land,  
And leaving all my happier kin  
Of beasts and birds behind to win  
The great rewards which only they  
Can win who Nature's laws obey.

Under these roofs of waving thatch,  
Lying whole days to dream and watch,  
I find myself grow more and more  
Vassal of summer than before ;

Allegiances I thought were sworn  
For life I break with hate and scorn.  
One thing alone I hope, desire :  
To make my human life come nigher  
The life these lead whose silent gaze  
Reproaches me and all my ways ;  
To glide along as they all glide,  
Submissive and unterrified,  
Without a thought of loss or gain,  
Without a jar of haste or pain,  
And go, without one quickened breath,  
Finding all realms of life, of death,  
But summer hours in sunny lands,  
To my next house not made with hands.

### MY STRAWBERRY.



MARVEL, fruit of fruits, I pause  
To reckon thee. I ask what cause  
Set free so much of red from heats  
At core of earth, and mixed such sweets  
With sour and spice : what was that strength  
Which out of darkness, length by length,  
Spun all thy shining thread of vine,  
Netting the fields in bond as thine.  
I see thy tendrils drink by sips  
From grass and clover's smiling lips ;  
I hear thy roots dig down for wells,  
Tapping the meadow's hidden cells ;  
Whole generations of green things,



Descended from long lines of springs,  
I see make room for thee to bide  
A quiet comrade by their side ;  
I see the creeping peoples go  
Mysterious journeys to and fro,  
Treading to right and left of thee,  
Doing thee homage wonderingly.  
I see the wild bees as they fare,  
Thy cups of honey drink, but spare.  
I mark thee bathe and bathe again  
In sweet uncalendared spring rain.  
I watch how all May has of sun  
Makes haste to have thy ripeness done,  
While all her nights let dews escape  
To set and cool thy perfect shape.  
Ah, fruit of fruits, no more I pause  
To dream and seek thy hidden laws !  
I stretch my hand and dare to taste,  
In instant of delicious waste  
On single feast, all things that went  
To make the empire thou hast spent.

TRIUMPH.

**N**OT he who rides through conquered city's  
gate,  
At head of blazoned hosts, and to the sound  
Of victors' trumpets, in full pomp and state  
Of war, the utmost pitch has dreamed or foud  
To which the thrill of triumph can be wound ;

Nor he, who by a nation's vast acclaim  
 Is sudden sought and singled out alone,  
 And while the people madly shout his name,  
 Without a conscious purpose of his own,  
 Is swung and lifted to the nation's throne ;

But he who has all single-handed stood  
 With foes invisible on every side,  
 And, unsuspected of the multitude,  
 The force of fate itself has dared, defied,  
 And conquered silently.

Ah that soul knows  
 In what white heat the blood of triumph glows !

### RETURN TO THE HILLS.



LIKE a music of triumph and joy  
 Sounds the roll of the wheels,  
 And the breath of the engine laughs out  
 In loud chuckles and peals,  
 Like the laugh of a man that is glad  
 Coming homeward at night ;  
 I lean out of the window and nod  
 To the left and the right,  
 To my friends in the fields and the woods ;  
 Not a face do I miss ;  
 The sweet asters and browned golden-rod,  
 And that stray clematis,  
 Of all vagabonds dearest and best,  
 In most seedy estate ;

I am sure they all recognize me ;  
If I only could wait,  
I should hear all the welcome which now  
In their faces I read,  
“ O true lover of us and our kin,  
We all bid thee God speed ! ”

O my mountains, no wisdom can teach  
Me to think that ye care  
Nothing more for my steps than the rest,  
Or that they can have share  
Such as mine in your royal crown-lands,  
Unencumbered of fee ;  
In your temples with altars unhewn,  
Where redemption is free ;  
In your houses of treasure, which gold  
Cannot buy if it seek ;  
And your oracles, mystic with words,  
Which men lose if they speak !

Ah ! with boldness of lovers who wed  
I make haste to your feet,  
And as constant as lovers who die,  
My surrender repeat ;  
And I take as the right of my love,  
And I keep as its sign,  
An ineffable joy in each sense  
And new strength as from wine,  
A seal for all purpose and hope,  
And a pledge of full light,  
Like a pillar of cloud for my day,  
And of fire for my night.

## "DOWN TO SLEEP."



NOVEMBER woods are bare and still ;  
November days are clear and bright ;  
Each noon burns up the morning's chill ;  
The morning's snow is gone by night ;  
Each day my steps grow slow, grow light,  
As through the woods I reverent creep,  
Watching all things lie "down to sleep."

I never knew before what beds,  
Fragrant to smell, and soft to touch,  
The forest sifts and shapes and spreads ;  
I never knew before how much  
Of human sound there is in such  
Low tones as through the forest sweep  
When all wild things lie "down to sleep."

Each day I find new coverlids  
Tucked in, and more sweet eyes shut tight ;  
Sometimes the viewless mother bids  
Her ferns kneel down, full in my sight ;  
I hear their chorus of "good night" ;  
And half I smile, and half I weep,  
Listening while they lie "down to sleep."

November woods are bare and still ;  
November days are bright and good ;  
Life's noon burns up life's morning chill ;

Life's night rests feet which long have stood ;  
Some warm soft bed, in field or wood,  
The mother will not fail to keep,  
Where we can "lay us down to sleep."

FALLOW.



BOVE, below me, on the hill,  
Great fields of grain their fulness fill ;  
The golden fruit bends down the trees ;  
The grass stands high round mowers'  
knees ;

The bee pants through the clover-beds,  
And cannot taste of half the heads ;  
The farmer stands, with greedy eyes,  
And counts his harvest's growing size.

Among his fields, so fair to see,  
He takes no count, no note, of me.  
I lie and bask, along the hill,  
Content and idle, idle still,  
My lazy silence never stirred  
By breathless bee or hungry bird :  
All creatures know the cribs which yield ;  
No creature seeks the fallow field.

But to no field on all the hill  
Come sun and rain with more good-will ;  
All secrets which they bear and bring

To wheat before its ripening,  
To clover turning purple red,  
To grass in bloom for mowers' tread, —  
They tell the same to my bare waste,  
But never once bid me to haste.

Winter is near, and snow is sweet ;  
Who knows if they be seeds of wheat  
Or clover, which my bosom fill ?  
Who knows how many summers will  
Be needed, spent, before one thing  
Is ready for my harvesting ?  
And after all, if all were laid  
Into sure balances and weighed,  
Who knows if all the gain and get  
On which hot human hearts are set  
Do more than mark the drought and dearth  
Through which this little dust of earth  
Must lie and wait in God's great hand,  
A patient bit of fallow land ?



## LOVE'S RICH AND POOR.



MAKING me hand in hand,  
Love led me through his land.  
His land bloomed white and red ;  
His palaces were fair ;  
Glad people everywhere  
Stood smiling.  
Then Love said, —

“ With all my kingdom wins,  
Never my heart begins  
To rest ; my cruel poor  
So rob my rich. By speech,  
By look, they overreach,  
And plunder every store.

“ My rich I love, and make  
More rich, for giving's sake.  
My poor I scorn ; they choose  
Their chilly beggary ;  
My gold is ready, free,  
But they forget, refuse.

“ My rich I love. I weep  
To see them starved, to keep  
My worthless poor well fed ;  
To see them shiver, cold,  
While wrapped with fold on fold,  
The beggars sleep in bed.

“My rich I love, and yet  
 My love no law can set ;  
 In vain I warn and cry ;  
 They give, and give, and give ;  
 The selfish beggars live,  
 And smiling see them die.”

Then walking hand in hand  
 With Love throughout his land, —  
 Land blooming white and red, —  
 I saw that everywhere,  
 Where life and love looked fair,  
 It was as he had said.

## LIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN-TOPS.



N Alpine valleys, they who watch for dawn  
 Look never to the east ; but fix their eyes  
 On loftier mountain-peaks of snow, which rise  
 To west or south.

Before the happy morn  
 Has sent one ray of kindling red, to warn  
 The sleeping clouds along the eastern skies  
 That it is near, — flushing, in glad surprise,  
 These royal hills, for royal watchmen born,  
 Discover that God's great new day begins,  
 And, shedding from their sacred brows a light  
 Prophetic, wake the valley from its night.



Such mystic light as this a great soul wins,  
Who overlooks earth's wall of griefs and sins,  
And steadfast, always, gazing on the white  
Great throne of God, can call aloud with deep,  
Pure voice of truth, to waken them who sleep.

BAD-GASTEIN, AUSTRIA, September 9, 1869.

CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN ST. PETER'S.



OW on the marble floor I lie :

I am alone :

Though friendly voices whisper nigh,  
And foreign crowds are passing by,

I am alone.

Great hymns float through

The shadowed aisles. I hear a slow

Refrain, "Forgive them, for they know  
Not what they do."

With tender joy all others thrill ;

I have but tears :

The false priests' voices, high and shrill,

Reiterate the "Peace, good-will" ;

I have but tears.

I hear anew

The nails and scourge ; then come the low

Sad words, "Forgive them, for they know  
Not what they do."

Close by my side the poor souls kneel ;

I turn away ;

Half-pitying looks at me they steal ;

They think, because I do not feel,

I turn away.

Ah ! if they knew,

How following them, where'er they go,

I hear, " Forgive them, for they know

Not what they do

Above the organ's sweetest strains

I hear the groans

Of prisoners, who lie in chains,

So near, and in such mortal pains,

I hear the groans.

But Christ walks through

The dungeons of St. Angelo,

And says, " Forgive them, for they know

Not what they do."

And now the music sinks to sighs ;

The lights grow dim :

The Pastorella's melodies

In lingering echoes float and rise ;

The lights grow dim ;

More clear and true,

In this sweet silence, seem to flow

The words, " Forgive them, for they know

Not what they do."

The dawn swings incense, silver gray ;

The night is past ;

Now comes, triumphant, God's full day ;  
 No priest, no church can bar its way :  
 The night is past :  
 How, on this blue  
 Of God's great banner, blaze and glow  
 The words, " Forgive them, for they know  
 Not what they do ! "

ROME, December 26, 1868.

## WELCOME.

TO C. C.



ELCOME ! Perhaps the simple word says  
 all.

And yet, when from a country's earnest heart  
 It sudden springs, quick pride and triumph  
 start,

Eager as love, and even hold in thrall  
 Of silence love's own speech, while they recall  
 How in all men's great deeds of life and art  
 Their native land immortal share and part  
 Must keep.

But thou, O royal soul, how small  
 Such laurels unto thee, we know who love  
 Thee, and whom thou hast loved ! We dare to bring  
 To thee this mite of silent offering,  
 And know how it thy great, warm heart will move,  
 That, dumb with joy, we find no voice as yet,  
 And cannot see, because our eyes are wet !

## TWO COMRADES.

TO O. W. AND H. DE K.



S when in some green forest depth we find  
The spot to which with idle, tinkling feet,  
Two brooks have danced all unawares to  
meet

Each other, where at sight they interwind  
Their shining arms, and loving, trusting, bind  
Themselves for life, and with a louder song  
And in a wider channel glide along ;

As when in some great symphony we trace,  
Through deep and underlying harmonies,  
How all the notes of melody uprise,  
Lifted by answering notes in distant place,  
Fulfilling each in each the final grace,  
But shielding, keeping each from each  
The separate voices through the blended speech ;

So when we see two human souls by fate  
Held in life's restless current side by side,  
And in their deepest nature so allied  
That each, but for the other, life's estate  
Must smaller find, a sense of joy, too great  
Almost for speech, thrills earnest souls who heed  
Their fellowship and long to say "God-speed !"

Two comrades such as these I know, — young, fair ;  
So fair, that choice cannot find right to choose ;  
So fair, that wish can nothing miss or lose  
In either face ; so young, their eyes still wear  
The looks with which young children trust and dare ;  
So young, the womanhood of each warm heart  
As yet finds love enough in love of Art.

One, silent, — with a silence whose quick speech  
By subtler eloquence than any word,  
Reveals when deepest depths are touched and  
    stirred, —  
Reveals by color tides which mount and reach  
Her broad, white brow, as on some magic beach,  
Where only spotless, peaceful snows resist,  
Might break a crimson sea through veiling mist.

Silent, with silence which might often make  
Dull ears believe the answer unexpressed  
Meant an assent, or aquiescent rest ;  
Silence whose earnestness dull souls mistake ;  
But silence out of which words leap and break,  
As from their sheaths swords leap and flash in sun,  
When comes the time for swords, and truce is done ;

Silence which to all finer spirits is  
Full of such revelation and delight  
As Nature's lovers find and feel in sight  
Of her most sacred, subtle silences ;  
Silence of mountain lake, untouched by breeze ;  
Silence of lily's heart, cool, white, and pure ;  
Silence of crystal growths, patient and sure.

The other, earnest equally, but born  
With veins made for a tropic current's flow ;  
Intolerant if fate seem cold, seem slow ;  
Full of a noble, restless, dauntless scorn ;  
Unjust to night, for eager love of morn ;  
Unjust to small things for the love of great ;  
Too faithless of all good which tarries late.

But yet through all this tropic current's heat,  
Through all this scorn of failures and delays,  
Lives faithfulness which never disobeys  
The smallest law of patience, and, more sweet  
Than patience' self, works on to its complete  
Fulfilling, wresting thus from alien powers  
A double guerdon for the conquered hours.

In vain among all rich and beauteous things  
With which the realms of beauteous Nature teems  
I look for one which fair and fitting seems  
As simile for her swift soul, which wings  
Itself more swift than bird can fly, which springs  
And soars like fountain, but finds no content  
At levels whence its own bright waters went.

Only one thing there is whose name is name  
Also for her : swift, restless, patient fire,  
Which, burning always, loses no desire ;  
Which leaps and soars and blazes all the same,  
If spices or dull fagots feed its flame ;  
Swift, restless, patient fire, which saves and turns  
Into more precious things all things it burns.

O comrades, sweet to know and hear and see,  
 Whom I have dared to paint, each empty phrase  
 But mocks my thought ; no dreamy singer's praise,  
 No flattering voice of hope and prophecy  
 Of what the future years shall bring and be,  
 No stranger's recognition do ye need !  
 Ah ! comrades, sweet to hear and see, " God-speed ! "

DEMETER.



LEGEND of foul shame to motherhood !  
 How doubly orphaned ignorance which  
 wrought

Such tale ; which deemed a mother's soul  
 had bought

One healing for her woe in that she could  
 Strike other mothers desolate ; — made good  
 Her loss by theirs, unpitying while they sought  
 As she had sought, weeping and finding nought  
 But cruel empty places where had stood  
 The children.

Ah, true motherhood, bereft,  
 Finds only joy in thought that joy is left  
 For other mothers : smiling, it abides  
 In loneliness, a little way apart,  
 And from all happy mothers gladly hides,  
 And veils the chilly winter in its heart.

## EXPECTANCY.



PERPETUAL dawn makes glorious all hills ;  
 Perpetual altar-feast sets fresh shew-bread ;  
 Perpetual symphony swells overhead ;  
 Perpetual revelation pours and fills

For every eye and ear and soul which wills  
 And waits, with will and waiting which are wed  
 Into true harmony, like that which led  
 The forces under which, with silent thrills,  
 Earth's subtile life began.

Ah, on the brink

Of each new age of great eternity, I think,  
 After the ages have all countless grown,  
 Our souls will poise and launch with eager wing,  
 Forgetting blessedness already known,  
 In sweet impatience for God's next good thing.

## BELATED.



IN a September day I came  
 Seeking that flower of sweetest name  
 Of all, from which the lavish June  
 With boundless fragrance fills the noon,

In woods where her best blossoms hide.  
 "O sweet Twin-Flower !" I longing cried,  
 Hopeless but eager, "is there still  
 One tiny pink bell left ? And will



Thy guardian fairy condescend  
To guide my feet, that I may bend,  
In reverent and fond delight,  
Once more at the transcendent sight ? ”  
The spicy woods were still and cool ;  
In many a little mossy pool  
Bright leaves were floating round and round ;  
The partridge mother’s watchful sound,  
The sighs of dying leaves that fell,  
Were all that broke the silent spell.  
In mats and tangles everywhere,  
The Twin-Flower vines lay, green and fair,  
With subtle beauty all their own,  
Wreathing each hillock and each stone,  
Stretching in slender coiling shoot,  
Far out of sight of parent root,  
Making white silken fibres fast  
To all the mosses as they passed ;  
But trembling, empty, withered, bare,  
Stood all the thread-like flower-stems there.  
“ Too late,” I said, and rambled on,  
Sadder because the flowers were gone,  
Yet glad, and laden with green vines  
Of everything that climbs and twines ;  
With glossy ferns, and snowy seeds  
Strung thick on scarlet stems, like beads,  
And Tiarellas packed between  
In mottled, scalloped disks of green,  
And purple Asters fit for hem  
Of High-Priest’s robes, and, shading them  
Like sunlit tree-tops waving broad,  
Great branching stalks of Golden Rod.

So, glad and laden, through the wood  
I went, till on its edge I stood,  
When at my very feet I saw,  
With sudden joy, half joy, half awe,  
Low nestled in a dead log's cleft  
One pale Twin-Flower, the last one left.  
So near my hasty step had been  
To trampling it, it quivered in  
The air, and like a fairy bell  
Swung to and fro, with notes that fell  
No doubt on hidden ears more fine,  
And more of kin to it than mine.  
"O dear belated thing!" I cried,  
And knelt like worshipper beside  
The mossy log. The wood, so still,  
With sudden echo seemed to fill.  
Repeated on each side I heard  
In soft rebuke my thoughtless word,  
"Belated" !

No ! ah, never yet  
The smallest reckoning was set  
Too slow, too fast, by Nature's hand.  
Her hours appointed faithful stand.  
Her million doors wide-open stay.  
Love cannot lose nor leave his way,  
Comes not too soon, comes not too late.  
Twin-Flowers and hearts their lovers wait.

## TO AN UNKNOWN LADY.

There lived a lady who was lovelier  
 Than anything that my poor skill may paint, —  
 Though I would follow round the world till faint  
 I fell, for just one little look at her.  
 Who said she seemed like this or that did err :  
 Like her dear self she was, alone, — no taint  
 From touch of mortal or of earth ; blest saint  
 Serene, with many a faithful worshipper !  
 There is no poet's poesy would not,  
 When laid against the whiteness of her meek,  
 Proud, solemn face, make there a pitiful blot.  
 It is so strange that I can never speak  
 Of her without a tear. O, I forgot !  
 This surely may fall blameless on that cheek !

*From THE RIDDLE OF LOVERS, Scribner's Monthly for June, 1873.*



KNOW a lady — no, I do not know  
 Her face, her voice ; I do not know her  
 name :  
 And yet such sudden, subtle knowledge  
 came

To me of her one day, that I am slow  
 To think that if I met her I should go  
 Amiss in greeting her. Such sweet, proud shame  
 In every look would tell her hidden fame  
 Whose poet lover, singing, loves her so  
 That all his songs unconsciously repeat  
 The fact of her, no matter what he sings,

The color and the tone of her in things  
Remotest, and the presence of her, sweet  
And strong to hold him lowest at her feet,  
When most he soars on highest sunlit wings.

I bless thee, Lady whom I do not know !  
I thank God for thy unseen, beauteous face,  
And lovely soul, which make this year of grace  
In all our land so full of grace to grow ;  
As years were, solemn centuries ago,  
When lovers knew to set in stateliest place  
Their mistresses, and, for their sake, no race  
Disdained or feared to run, they loved them so.  
Reading the verses which I know are thine,  
My heart grows reverent, as on holy ground.  
I think of many an unnamed saintly shrine  
I saw in Old World churches, hung around  
With pictured scrolls and gifts in grateful sign  
Of help which sore-pressed souls of men had found.

O sweetest immortality, which pain  
Of Love's most bitter ecstasy can buy,  
Sole immortality which can defy  
Earth's power on earth's own ground, and never wane  
All other ways, hearts breaking, try in vain.  
All fire and flood and moth and rust outvie  
Love's artifice. The sculptor's marbles lie  
In shapeless fragments ; and to dust again  
The painter's hand had scarcely turned, before  
His colors faded. But the poet came,

Giving to her from whom he took, his fame,  
Placing her than the angels little lower,  
And centuries cannot harm her any more  
Than they can pale the stars which heard her name.

A WILD ROSE IN SEPTEMBER.



WILD red rose, what spell has stayed  
Till now thy summer of delights ?  
Where hid the south wind when he laid  
His heart on thine, these autumn nights ?

O wild red rose ! Two faces glow  
At sight of thee, and two hearts share  
All thou and thy south wind can know  
Of sunshine in this autumn air.

O sweet wild rose ! O strong south wind !  
The sunny roadside asks no reasons  
Why we such secret summer find,  
Forgetting calendars and seasons !

Alas ! red rose, thy petals wilt ;  
Our loving hands tend thee in vain ;  
Our thoughtless touch seems like a guilt ;  
Ah, could we make thee live again !

Yet joy, wild rose ! Be glad, south wind !  
 Immortal wind ! immortal rose !  
 Ye shall live on, in two hearts shrined,  
 With secrets which no words disclose.

### AN ARCTIC QUEST.



PROUDLY name their names who bravely  
 sail  
 To seek brave lost in Arctic snows and seas !  
 Bring money and bring ships, and on strong  
 knees

Pray prayers so strong that not one word can fail  
 To pierce God's listening heart !

Rigid and pale,  
 The lost men's bodies, waiting, drift and freeze ;  
 Yet shall their solemn dead lips tell to these  
 Who find them secrets mighty to prevail  
 On farther, darker, icier seas.

I go  
 Alone, unhelped, unprayed-for. Perishing  
 For years in realms of more than Arctic snow,  
 My heart has lingered.

Will the poor dead thing  
 Be sign to guide past bitter flood and floe,  
 To open sea, some strong heart triumphing ?

## THE SIGN OF THE DAISY.



ALL summer she scattered the daisy leaves ;  
They only mocked her as they fell.  
She said : " The daisy but deceives ;  
There is no virtue in its spell.

' He loves me not,' ' he loves me well,'  
One story no two daisies tell."

Ah, foolish heart, which waits and grieves  
Under the daisy's mocking spell !

But summer departed, and came again.

The daisies whitened every hill ;  
Her heart had lost its last year's pain,  
Her heart of love had had its fill,  
And held love's secrets at its will.

The daisies stood untouched and still,  
No message in that snowy rain  
To one whose heart had had its fill !

So never the daisy's sweet sign deceives,

Though no two will one story tell ;  
The glad heart sees the daisy leaves,  
But thinks not of their hidden spell,  
Heeds not which lingered and which fell.

" He loves me ; yes, he loves me well."  
Ah, happy heart which sees, believes !  
This is the daisy's secret spell !

## VINTAGE.



BEFORE the time of grapes,  
While they altered in the sun,  
And out of the time of grapes,  
When vintage songs were done, —

From secret southern spot,  
Whose warmth not a mortal knew ;  
From shades which the sun forgot,  
Or could not struggle through, —

Wine sweeter than first wine,  
She gave him by drop, by drop ;  
Wine stronger than seal could sign,  
She poured and did not stop.

Soul of my soul, the shapes  
Of the things of earth are one ;  
Rememberest thou the grapes  
I brought thee in the sun ?

And darest thou still drink  
Wine stronger than seal can sign ?  
And smilest thou to think  
Eternal vintage thine ?





LAST WORDS.



DEAR hearts, whose love has been so sweet  
to know,  
That I am looking backward as I go,  
Am lingering while I haste, and in this rain  
Of tears of joy am mingling tears of pain ;  
Do not adorn with costly shrub, or tree,  
Or flower, the little grave which shelters me.  
Let the wild wind-sown seeds grow up unharmed,  
And back and forth all summer, unalarmed,  
Let all the tiny, busy creatures creep ;  
Let the sweet grass its last year's tangles keep ;  
And when, remembering me, you come some day  
And stand there, speak no praise, but only say,  
"How she loved us ! 'T was that which made her  
dear !"  
Those are the words that I shall joy to hear.





## SONNETS AND LYRICS



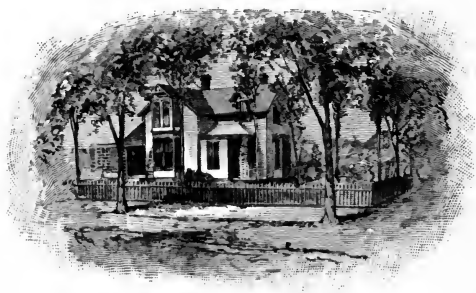
# SONNETS AND LYRICS

BY

HELEN JACKSON (H. H.)

AUTHOR OF

"VERSES," "RAMONA," "BITS OF TRAVEL," ETC., ETC.



BOSTON

ROBERTS BROTHERS

1888

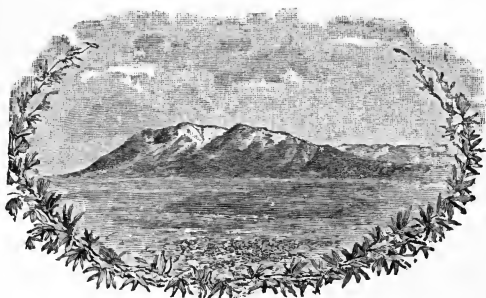
*Copyright, 1886,*  
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University Press:  
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE.

*U*NTO one who lies at rest  
'Neath the sunset, in the West,  
Clover-blossoms on her breast.

*Lover of each gracious thing  
Which makes glad the summer-tide,  
From the daisies clustering  
And the violets purple-eyed,  
To those shy and hidden blooms  
Which in forest coverts stay,  
Sending wandering perfumes  
Out as guides to show the way,  
All she knew, to all was kind;  
None so humble or so small  
That she did not seek and find  
Silent friendship from them all.  
Moss-cups, tiarella leaves,  
Dappled like the adder's skin,  
Fungus huts with ivory eaves  
Which the fairies harbor in,  
Regiments of fronded ferns,  
Golden-rod and asters frail,  
Every flaming leaf that burns  
Red against the autumn pale,  
Every pink-cupped wayside rose,—  
All to her were dear and known;  
But above them all she chose  
Clover-blossoms for her own.*

*So they laid her to her rest  
In the sun-warmed, bounteous West,  
Clover-blossoms on her breast.*





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## A DREAM.



DREAMED that I was dead and crossed  
the heavens, —

Heavens after heavens with burning feet  
and swift, —

And cried : “ O God, where art Thou ? I left one  
On earth, whose burden I would pray Thee lift.”

I was so dead I wondered at no thing, —

Not even that the angels slowly turned  
Their faces, speechless, as I hurried by  
(Beneath my feet the golden pavements burned) ;

Nor, at the first, that I could not find God,  
Because the heavens stretched endlessly like  
space.

At last a terror seized my very soul ;  
I seemed alone in all the crowded place.

Then, sudden, one compassionate cried out,  
Though like the rest his face from me he turned,  
As I were one no angel might regard  
(Beneath my feet the golden pavements burned):

“No more in heaven than earth will he find God  
Who does not know his loving mercy swift  
But waits the moment consummate and ripe,  
Each burden from each human soul to lift.”

Though I was dead, I died again for shame ;  
Lonely, to flee from heaven again I turned ;  
The ranks of angels looked away from me  
(Beneath my feet the golden pavements burned).

## DANGER.



WITH what a childish and short-sighted  
sense

Fear seeks for safety ; reckons up the  
days

Of danger and escape, the hours and ways  
Of death ; it breathless flies the pestilence ;  
It walls itself in towers of defence ;  
By land, by sea, against the storm it lays  
Down barriers ; then, comforted, it says :  
“ This spot, this hour is safe.” Oh, vain pretence !  
Man born of man knows nothing when he goes ;  
The winds blow where they list, and will disclose  
To no man which brings safety, which brings risk.  
The mighty are brought low by many a thing  
Too small to name. Beneath the daisy’s disk  
Lies hid the pebble for the fatal sling.

## FREEDOM.



HAT freeman knoweth freedom? Never  
he

Whose father's fathers through long lives  
have reigned

O'er kingdoms which mere heritage attained.  
Though from his youth to age he roam as free  
As winds, he dreams not freedom's ecstasy.  
But he whose birth was in a nation chained  
For centuries ; where every breath was drained  
From breasts of slaves which knew not there could  
be

Such thing as freedom, — he beholds the light  
Burst, dazzling ; though the glory blind his sight  
He knows the joy. Fools laugh because he reels  
And wields confusedly his infant will ;  
The wise man watching with a heart that feels  
Says : " Cure for freedom's harms is freedom still."



THE GODS SAID LOVE IS BLIND.



HE gods said Love is blind. The earth  
was young  
With foolish, youthful laughter when it  
heard ;

It caught and spoke the letter of the words,  
And from that time till now hath said and sung,  
“ Oh, Love is blind ! The falsest face and tongue  
Can cheat him, once his passion's thrill is stirred :  
He is so blind, poor Love ! ”

Strange none demurred  
At this, nor saw how hollow false it rang,  
When all men know that sightless men can tell  
Unnumbered things which vision cannot find.  
Powers of the air are leagued to guide them well ;  
And things invisible weave clew and spell  
By which all labyrinths they safely wind.  
Ah, we were lost, if Love had not been blind !

## THE FIR-TREE AND THE BROOK.



THE Fir-Tree looked on stars, but loved the  
Brook !

“O silver-voiced ! if thou wouldst wait,  
My love can bravely woo.” All smiles forsook  
The Brook’s white face. “Too late !  
Too late ! I go to wed the sea.  
I know not if my love would curse or bless thee.  
I may not, dare not, tarry to caress thee,  
Oh, do not follow me !”

The Fir-Tree moaned and moaned till spring ;  
Then laughed in maniac joy to feel  
Early one day, the woodmen of the King  
Sign him with sign of burning steel,  
The first to fall. “Now flee  
Thy swiftest, Brook ! Thy love may curse or bless  
me,  
I care not, if but once thou dost caress me,  
O Brook, I follow thee !”

All torn and bruised with mark of axe and chain,  
Hurled down the dizzy slide of sand,

Tossed by great waves in ecstasy of pain,  
And rudely thrown at last to land,  
The Fir-Tree heard : " Oh, see  
With what fierce love it is I must caress thee !  
I warned thee I might curse, and never bless thee,  
Why did'st thou follow me ? "

All stately set with spar and brace and rope,  
The Fir-Tree stood and sailed, and sailed.  
In wildest storm when all the ship lost hope,  
The Fir-Tree never shook nor quailed,  
Nor ceased from saying, " Free  
Art thou, O Brook ! But once thou hast caressed  
me ;  
For life, for death, thy love has cursed or blessed  
me ;  
Behold, I follow thee ! "

Lost in a night, and no man left to tell,  
Crushed in the giant icebergs' play,  
The ship went down without a song, a knell.  
Still drifts the Fir-Tree night and day ;  
Still moans along the sea  
A voice : " O Fir-Tree ! thus must I possess thee ;  
Eternally, brave love, will I caress thee,  
Dead for the love of me ! "

## A ROSE-LEAF.



ROSE-LEAF on the snowy deck,  
The high wind whirling it astern ;  
Nothing the wind could know or reck ;  
Why did the King's eye thither turn ?

“The Queen has walked here !” hoarse he cried.  
The courtiers, stunned, turned red, turned  
white ;  
No use if they had stammered, lied ;  
Aghast they fled his angry sight.

Kings' wives die quick, when kings go mad ;  
To death how fair and grave she goes !  
What if the king knew now, she had  
Shut in her hand a little rose ?

And men die quick when kings have said ;  
Bleeding, dishonored, flung apart  
In outcast field a man lies dead  
With rose-leaves warm upon his heart.

## A WOMAN'S BATTLE.



DEAR foe, I know thou 'lt win the fight.

I know thou hast the stronger bark,  
And thou art sailing in the light,  
While I am creeping in the dark.  
Thou dost not dream that I am crying,  
As I come up with colors flying.

I clear away my wounded, slain,  
With strength like frenzy, strong and swift ;  
I do not feel the tug and strain,  
Though dead are heavy, hard to lift.  
If I looked in their faces dying,  
I could not keep my colors flying.

Dear foe, it will be short, — our fight, —  
Though lazily thou train'st thy guns ;  
Fate steers us, — me to deeper night,  
And thee to brighter seas and suns ;  
But thou 'lt not dream that I am dying,  
As I sail by with colors flying !

## ESTHER.



FACE more vivid than he dreamed who  
drew

Thy portrait in that thrilling tale of old !

Dead queen, we see thee still, thy beauty cold

As beautiful ; thy dauntless heart which knew

No fear, — not even of a king who slew

At pleasure ; maiden heart which was not sold,

Though all the maiden flesh the king's red gold

Did buy ! The loyal daughter of the Jew,

No hour saw thee forget his misery ;

Thou wert not queen until thy race went free ;

Yet thoughtful hearts, that ponder slow and deep,

Find doubtful reverence at last for thee ;

Thou heldest thy race too dear, thyself too cheap ;

Honor no second place for truth can keep.

## VASHTI.



N all great Shushan's palaces was there  
Not one, O Vashti, knowing thee so  
well,

Poor uncrowned queen, that he the world could tell  
How thou wert pure and loyal-souled as fair?  
How it was love which made thee bold to dare  
Refuse the shame which madmen would compel?  
Not one, who saw the bitter tears that fell  
And heard thy cry heart-rending on the air :  
“ Ah me ! My Lord could not this thing have  
meant !

He well might loathe me ever, if I go  
Before these drunken princes as a show.  
I am his queen : I come of king's descent.  
I will not let him bring our crown so low ;  
He will but bless me when he doth repent ! ”

## BURNT OFFERING.



HE fire leaped up, swift, hot, and red ;  
Swift, hot, and red, waiting a prey ;  
The woman came with swift, light tread,  
And silently knelt down to lay  
Armfuls of leaves upon the fire,  
As men lay fagots on a pyre.

Armfuls of leaves which had been bright  
Like painter's tints six months before,  
All faded now, a ghastly sight,  
Dusty and colorless, she bore,  
And knelt and piled them on the fire,  
As men lay fagots on the pyre.

Watching the crackle and the blaze,  
Idly I smiled and idly said :  
" Good-by, dead leaves, go dead leaves' ways.  
Next year there will be more as red."  
The woman turned, and from the fire  
Looked up as from a funeral-pyre.



I saw my idle words had been

Far crueler than I could know,  
And made an old wound bleed again.

“These are not leaves,” she whispered low,  
“That I am burning in the fire,  
But days, — it is a funeral pyre.”

## BON VOYAGE.



HERE 'S not an hour but from some sparkling beach

Go joyful men, in fragile ships to sail,  
By unknown seas to unknown lands. They hail  
The freshening winds with eager hope, and speech  
Of wondrous countries which they soon will reach.  
Left on the shore, we wave our hands, with pale,  
Wet cheeks, but hearts that are ashamed to quail,  
Or own the grief which selfishness would teach.  
O Death, the fairest lands beyond thy sea  
Lie waiting, and thy barks are swift and stanch  
And ready. Why do we reluctant launch?  
And when our friends their heritage have claimed  
Of thee, and entered on it, rich and free,  
Oh, why are we of sorrow not ashamed?

## NEW YEAR'S MORNING.



ONLY a night from old to new !  
Only a night, and so much wrought !  
The Old Year's heart all weary grew,  
But said : " The New Year rest has brought."  
The Old Year's heart its hopes laid down,  
As in a grave ; but, trusting, said :  
" The blossoms of the New Year's crown  
Bloom from the ashes of the dead."  
The Old Year's heart was full of greed ;  
With selfishness it longed and ached,  
And cried : " I have not half I need.  
My thirst is bitter and unslaked.  
But to the New Year's generous hand  
All gifts in plenty shall return ;  
True loving it shall understand ;  
By all my failures it shall learn.  
I have been reckless ; it shall be  
Quiet and calm and pure of life.  
I was a slave ; it shall go free,  
And find sweet peace where I leave strife."

Only a night from old to new !  
Never a night such changes brought.  
The Old Year had its work to do ;  
No New Year miracles are wrought.

Always a night from old to new !  
Night and the healing balm of sleep !  
Each morn is New Year's morn come true,  
Morn of a festival to keep.  
All nights are sacred nights to make  
Confession and resolve and prayer ;  
All days are sacred days to wake  
New gladness in the sunny air.  
Only a night from old to new ;  
Only a sleep from night to morn.  
The new is but the old come true ;  
Each sunrise sees a new year born.

## JANUARY.



WINTER ! frozen pulse and heart of fire,  
What loss is theirs who from thy kingdom  
turn

Dismayed, and think thy snow a sculptured urn  
Of death ! Far sooner in midsummer tire  
The streams than under ice. June could not hire  
Her roses to forego the strength they learn  
In sleeping on thy breast. No fires can burn  
The bridges thou dost lay where men desire  
In vain to build.

O Heart, when Love's sun goes  
To northward, and the sounds of singing cease,  
Keep warm by inner fires, and rest in peace.  
Sleep on content, as sleeps the patient rose.  
Walk boldly on the white untrodden snows,  
The winter is the winter's own release.

## FEBRUARY.



TILL lie the sheltering snows, undimmed  
and white ;

And reigns the winter's pregnant silence  
still ;

No sign of spring, save that the catkins fill,  
And willow stems grow daily red and bright.  
These are the days when ancients held a rite  
Of expiation for the old year's ill,  
And prayer to purify the new year's will :  
Fit days, ere yet the spring rains blur the sight,  
Ere yet the bounding blood grows hot with haste,  
And dreaming thoughts grow heavy with a greed  
The ardent summer's joy to have and taste ;  
Fit days, to give to last year's losses heed,  
To reckon clear the new life's sterner need ;  
Fit days, for Feast of Expiation placed !

## MARCH.



MONTH which the warring ancients strangely  
styled

The month of war, — as if in their fierce  
ways

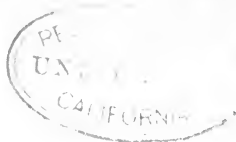
Were any month of peace ! — in thy rough days  
I find no war in Nature, though the wild  
Winds clash and clang, and broken boughs are piled  
At feet of writhing trees. The violets raise  
Their heads without affright, without amaze,  
And sleep through all the din, as sleeps a child.  
And he who watches well may well discern  
Sweet expectation in each living thing.  
Like pregnant mother the sweet earth doth yearn ;  
In secret joy makes ready for the spring ;  
And hidden, sacred, in her breast doth bear  
Annunciation lilies for the year.

## APRIL.



O days such honored days as these ! While  
yet  
Fair Aphrodite reigned, men seeking wide  
For some fair thing which should forever bide  
On earth, her beauteous memory to set  
In fitting frame that no age could forget,  
Her name in lovely April's name did hide,  
And leave it there, eternally allied  
To all the fairest flowers Spring did beget.  
And when fair Aphrodite passed from earth,  
Her shrines forgotten and her feasts of mirth,  
A holier symbol still in seal and sign,  
Sweet April took, of kingdom most divine,  
When Christ ascended, in the time of birth  
Of spring anemones, in Palestine.





## MAY.



MONTH when they who love must love  
and wed !

Were one to go to worlds where May is  
naught,

And seek to tell the memories he had brought  
From earth of thee, what were most fitly said?  
I know not if the rosy showers shed  
From apple-boughs, or if the soft green wrought  
In fields, or if the robin's call be fraught  
The most with thy delight. Perhaps they read  
Thee best who in the ancient time did say  
Thou wert the sacred month unto the old :  
No blossom blooms upon thy brightest day  
So subtly sweet as memories which unfold  
In aged hearts which in thy sunshine lie,  
To sun themselves once more before they die.

## JUNE.



MONTH whose promise and fulfilment  
blend,  
And burst in one ! it seems the earth can  
store

In all her roomy house no treasure more ;  
Of all her wealth no farthing have to spend  
On fruit, when once this stintless flowering end.  
And yet no tiniest flower shall fall before  
It hath made ready at its hidden core  
Its tithe of seed, which we may count and tend  
Till harvest. Joy of blossomed love, for thee  
Seems it no fairer thing can yet have birth?  
No room is left for deeper ecstasy?  
Watch well if seeds grow strong, to scatter free  
Germs for thy future summers on the earth.  
A joy which is but joy soon comes to dearth.

## JULY.



SOME flowers are withered and some joys  
have died ;

The garden reeks with an East Indian  
scent

From beds where gillyflowers stand weak and spent ;

The white heat pales the skies from side to side ;

But in still lakes and rivers, cool, content,

Like starry blooms on a new firmament,

White lilies float and regally abide.

In vain the cruel skies their hot rays shed ;

The lily does not feel their brazen glare.

In vain the pallid clouds refuse to share

Their dews ; the lily feels no thirst, no dread.

Unharm'd she lifts her queenly face and head ;

She drinks of living waters and keeps fair.

## AUGUST.



SILENCE again. The glorious symphony  
Hath need of pause and interval of peace.  
Some subtle signal bids all sweet sounds  
cease,

Save hum of insects' aimless industry.  
Pathetic summer seeks by blazonry  
Of color to conceal her swift decrease.  
Weak subterfuge ! Each mocking day doth fleece  
A blossom, and lay bare her poverty.  
Poor middle-aged summer ! Vain this show !  
Whole fields of golden-rod cannot offset  
One meadow with a single violet ;  
And well the singing thrush and lily know,  
Spite of all artifice which her regret  
Can deck in splendid guise, their time to go !

## SEPTEMBER.



GOLDEN month ! How high thy gold  
is heaped !

The yellow birch-leaves shine like bright  
coins strung

On wands ; the chestnut's yellow pennons tongue  
To every wind its harvest challenge. Steeped  
In yellow, still lie fields where wheat was reaped ;  
And yellow still the corn sheaves, stacked among  
The yellow gourds, which from the earth have wrung  
Her utmost gold. To highest boughs have leaped  
The purple grape, — last thing to ripen, late  
By very reason of its precious cost.

O Heart, remember, vintages are lost  
If grapes do not for freezing night-dews wait.  
Think, while thou sunnest thyself in Joy's estate,  
Mayhap thou canst not ripen without frost !

## OCTOBER.



THE month of carnival of all the year,  
When Nature lets the wild earth go its way,  
And spend whole seasons on a single day.  
The spring-time holds her white and purple dear ;  
October, lavish, flaunts them far and near ;  
The summer charily her reds doth lay  
Like jewels on her costliest array ;  
October, scornful, burns them on a bier.  
The winter hoards his pearls of frost in sign  
Of kingdom : whiter pearls than winter knew,  
Or Empress wore, in Egypt's ancient line,  
October, feasting 'neath her dome of blue,  
Drinks at a single draught, slow filtered through  
Sunshiny air, as in a tingling wine !

## NOVEMBER.



HIS is the treacherous month when autumn  
days

With summer's voice come bearing sum-  
mer's gifts.

Beguiled, the pale down-trodden aster lifts  
Her head and blooms again. The soft, warm haze  
Makes moist once more the sere and dusty ways,  
And, creeping through where dead leaves lie in drifts,  
The violet returns. Snow noiseless sifts  
Ere night, an icy shroud, which morning's rays  
Will idly shine upon and slowly melt,  
Too late to bid the violet live again.  
The treachery, at last, too late, is plain ;  
Bare are the places where the sweet flowers dwelt.  
What joy sufficient hath November felt ?  
What profit from the violet's day of pain ?

## DECEMBER.



THE lakes of ice gleam bluer than the lakes  
Of water 'neath the summer sunshine  
gleamed :

Far fairer than when placidly it streamed,  
The brook its frozen architecture makes,  
And under bridges white its swift way takes.  
Snow comes and goes as messenger who dreamed  
Might linger on the road ; or one who deemed  
His message hostile gently for their sakes  
Who listened might reveal it by degrees.  
We gird against the cold of winter wind  
Our loins now with mighty bands of sleep,  
In longest, darkest nights take rest and ease,  
And every shortening day, as shadows creep  
O'er the brief noontide, fresh surprises find.



## REFRAIN.



O' all the songs which poets sing,  
The ones which are most sweet,  
Are those which at close intervals  
A low refrain repeat ;  
Some tender word, some syllable,  
Over and over, ever and ever,  
While the song lasts,  
Altering never,  
Music if sung, music if said,  
Subtle like some fine golden thread  
A shuttle casts,  
In and out on a fabric red,  
Till it glows all through  
With the golden hue.  
Oh ! of all the songs sung,  
No songs are so sweet  
As the songs with refrains,  
Which repeat and repeat.

Of all the lives lived,  
No life is so sweet,

As the life where one thought,  
In refrain doth repeat,  
Over and over, ever and ever,  
Till the life ends,  
Altering never,  
Joy which is felt, but is not said,  
Subtler than any golden thread  
Which the shuttle sends  
In and out in a fabric red,  
Till it glows all through  
With a golden hue.  
Oh ! of all the lives lived,  
Can be no life so sweet  
As the life where one thought  
In refrain doth repeat.

“Now name me a thought  
To make life so sweet,  
A thought of such joy  
Its refrain to repeat.”  
Oh ! foolish to ask me. Ever, ever  
Who loveth believes,  
But telleth never.  
It might be a name, just a name not said,  
But in every thought ; like a golden thread  
Which the shuttle weaves  
In and out on a fabric red,

Till it glows all through  
With a golden hue.  
Oh ! of all sweet lives,  
Who can tell how sweet  
Is the life which one name  
In refrain doth repeat?

## TO AN ABSENT LOVER.



THAT so much change should come when  
thou dost go,  
Is mystery that I cannot ravel quite.  
The very house seems dark as when the light  
Of lamps goes out. Each wonted thing doth grow  
So altered, that I wander to and fro  
Bewildered by the most familiar sight,  
And feel like one who rouses in the night  
From dream of ecstasy, and cannot know  
At first if he be sleeping or awake.  
My foolish heart so foolish for thy sake  
Hath grown, dear one !

Teach me to be more wise.  
I blush for all my foolishness doth lack ;  
I fear to seem a coward in thine eyes.  
Teach me, dear one, — but first thou must  
come back !

## CROSSED THREADS.



THE silken threads by viewless spinners  
    spun,  
Which float so idly on the summer air,  
And help to make each summer morning fair,  
Shining like silver in the summer sun,  
Are caught by wayward breezes, one by one,  
And blown to east and west and fastened there,  
Weaving on all the roads their sudden snare.  
No sign which road doth safest, freest run,  
The wingèd insects know, that soar so gay  
To meet their death upon each summer day.  
How dare we any human deed arraign ;  
Attempt to reckon any moment's cost ;  
Or any pathway trust as safe and plain  
Because we see not where the threads have crossed ?

## OUTWARD BOUND.



THE hour has come. Strong hands the  
anchor raise ;  
Friends stand and weep along the fading  
shore,

In sudden fear lest we return no more,  
In sudden fancy that he safer stays  
Who stays behind ; that some new danger lays  
New snare in each fresh path untrod before.  
Ah, foolish hearts ! in fate's mysterious lore  
Is written no such choice of plan and days :  
Each hour has its own peril and escape ;  
In most familiar things' familiar shape  
New danger comes without or sight or sound ;  
No sea more foreign rolls than breaks each morn  
Across our thresholds when the day is born :  
We sail, at sunrise, daily, "outward bound."

## SEALED ORDERS.



HEN ship with "orders sealed" sails out  
to sea,

Men eager crowd the wharves, and reverent gaze

Upon their faces whose brave spirits raise  
No question if the unknown voyage be  
Of deadly peril. Benedictions free  
And prayers and tears are given, and the days  
Counted till other ships, on homeward ways,  
May bring back message of her destiny.  
Yet, all the time, Life's tossing sea is white  
With scudding sails which no man reefs or stays  
By his own will, for roughest day or night :  
Brave, helpless crews, with captain out of sight,  
Harbor unknown, voyage of long delays,  
They meet no other ships on homeward ways.

## TWO.

## I.

## APART.



ONE place — one roof — one name — their  
daily bread  
In daily sacrament they break  
Together, and together take  
Perpetual counsel, such as use has fed  
The habit of, in words which make  
No lie. For courtesy's sweet sake  
And pity's, one brave heart whose joy is dead,  
Smiles ever, answering words which wake  
But weariness ; hides all its ache, —  
Its hopeless ache, its longing and its dread ;  
Strong as a martyr at the stake  
Renouncing self ; striving to slake  
The pangs of thirst on bitter hyssop red  
With vinegar ! O brave, strong heart !  
God sets all days, all hours apart,  
Joy cometh at his hour appointed.



## II.

## TOGETHER.

No touch — no sight — no sound — wide continents  
And seas clasp hands to separate  
Them from each other now. Too late !  
Triumphant Love has leagued the elements  
To do their will. Hath light a mate  
For swiftness? Can it overweight  
The air? Or doth the sun know accidents?  
The light, the air, the sun, inviolate  
For them, do constant keep and state  
Message of their ineffable contents  
And raptures, each in each. So great  
Their bliss of loving, even fate  
In parting them, hath found no instruments  
Whose bitter pain insatiate  
Doth kill it, or their faith abate  
In presence of Love's hourly sacraments.

## THE GIFT OF GRAPES.

A LEGEND OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.



HE desert sun was sinking red ;  
Hot as at noon the light was shed.

Bareheaded, on the scorching sands,  
Macarius knelt with claspèd hands,

And prayed, as he had prayed for years,  
With smitings and with bitter tears.

“ Good hermit, here ! ” — a hand outstretched, —  
It was as if an angel fetched

The purple clusters, dewy blue, —  
“ Good hermit, here ! These grapes for you ! ”

Swift swept the rider by. The grapes  
Lay at the hermit's feet. “ Like shapes

“ Of magic, sent to tempt my sense,”  
Macarius thought. “ Sathanas, hence ! ”

He cried. "I will not touch nor taste.  
Yet, were it not wrong such fruit to waste?"

He paused. "I'll leave it at his door,  
My neighbor, who with illness sore

"Is like to die. He may partake,  
And sin not. Ay, for Jesus' sake,

"I will his dying lips beseech,  
Command, as if I were his leech."

Thus speaking, trembling as he spoke,  
Such parched desire within him woke,

To taste the grapes, he swiftly ran,  
And, kneeling by the dying man,

Held up the clusters, crying, "See,  
O brother! these were given me.

"I may not eat them; I am strong;  
But thou — it were for thee no wrong.

"Thy fever they will cool, allay;  
Thy failing strength revive and stay."

Reproachful turned the dying eyes,  
The whispers came like dying sighs:

“ Brother, thou mightst do better deed  
Than tempt the dying in his need.

“ Thy words are but the devil’s mesh,  
To snare at last my carnal flesh.”

Silent, Macarius went his way.  
Untouched the purple clusters lay

Beside the dying hermit’s bed.  
They found them there who found him dead, —

Two brother hermits who each morn,  
Water and bread to him had borne.

“ He drinks of living waters now,”  
They pious said, and smoothed his brow,

And prayed, and laid him in the ground,  
Envyng the rest he had found.

The purple grapes still lying there,  
Filled with sweet scent the desert air.

“ Where could these luscious clusters grow? ”  
“ He tasted not,” they whispered low ;

“ But fairer fruit glads now his eyes :  
He feasts to-day in paradise.”

On each a longing silence fell.

“ Brother, they tempt our souls to hell ! ”

Cried one. The other : “ Ay, how weak  
Our flesh ! Strange that so long we seek

“ In vain to dull its carnal sense.

Brother, we ’ll bear these clusters hence.

“ That aged hermit, in the cave,

Perchance these grapes his life might save.

“ Thou knowest, but yesterday ’t was said  
He starves ; eats neither pulse nor bread.”

Slow braiding baskets, in his door

The aged hermit sat, his store

Of rushes and his water-jar

In reach. He heard their steps afar,

And, as they nearer drew, up-raised

His well-nigh sightless eyes, and gazed

Bewilderedly. “ Eat, father, eat ! ”

The brothers cried, and at his feet,

Rev’reant, the purple clusters laid.

Trembling, but stern, the right hand made

Swift gesture of reproof. "Away!"  
In feeble voice he cried, "and pray

"To be forgiven! Heinous sin  
Is his who lets temptation in."

Meek-bowed, the brothers turned to go.  
"Stay!" said the hermit, whispering low:

"Leave them not here to tempt my sight.  
I may not eat. Some other might.

"As each man thinketh in his heart,  
So must he reckon duty's part.

"Mayhap some brother, in sore strait,  
Even this hour doth sit and wait,

"To whom God sends these clusters sweet  
By your pure hands. Be true! Be fleet!"

From cave to cave, from cell to cell,  
The brothers did their errand well.

In Nitria's desert, hermits then  
By scores were dwelling, holy men,

Mistaken saints, who thought to save  
Their souls, by making life a grave.

From cave to cave, from cell to cell,  
The brothers did their errand well.

At every hermit's feet they laid  
The tempting grapes, in vain, nor stayed

Till, at the desert's utmost bound,  
Macarius's cell they joyful found, —

Macarius, oldest, holiest saint  
Of all the desert. Weary, faint,

They knelt before him. “Father, see  
These grapes ! they must be meant for thee !

“These many days we bear them now ;  
And yet they do not withered grow.

“No brother will so much as taste.  
'T was Isidore who bade us haste

“To find the man to whom God sent  
The luscious gift. They must be meant

“For thee. Thou art the last.” “Ay,” said  
The good Macarius, flushing red

With holy joy, — “Ay ; meant for me,  
As token of the constancy

“Of all our brothers ! Blessed day  
Is this, my brothers ! Go your way !

“Christ fill your souls with lasting peace !  
The time is near of my release.”

Then, kneeling on the scorching sands,  
He stretched toward heaven his clasped hands,

And prayed, as he had prayed for years,  
With smitings and with bitter tears.

Untouched, the grapes lay glowing there,  
Filling with scent the desert air.



## AVALANCHES.



HEART that on Love's sunny height doth  
dwell,

And joy unquestioning by day, by night,  
Serene in trust because the skies are bright !  
Listen to what all Alpine records tell  
Of days on which the avalanches fell.  
Not days of storm when men were pale with fright,  
And watched the hills with anxious, straining sight,  
And heard in every sound a note of knell ;  
But when in heavens still, and blue, and clear,  
The sun rode high, — those were the hours to fear.  
And so the monks of San Bernard to-day, —  
May the Lord count their souls and hold them dear, —  
When skies are cloudless, in their convent stay,  
And for the souls of dead and dying pray.

## A WOMAN'S DEATH-WOUND.



It left upon her tender flesh no trace.  
The murderer is safe. As swift as light  
The weapon fell, and, in the summer night,  
Did scarce the silent, dewy air displace ;  
'T was but a word. A blow had been less base.  
Like dumb beast branded by an iron white  
With heat, she turned in blind and helpless flight,  
But then remembered, and with piteous face  
Came back.

Since then, the world has nothing missed  
In her, in voice or smile. But she — each day  
She counts until her dying be complete.  
One moan she makes, and ever doth repeat :  
“ O lips that I have loved and kissed and kissed,  
Did I deserve to die this bitterest way ? ”

## CHANCE.



THESE things I wondering saw beneath the  
sun :

That never yet the race was to the swift,  
The fight unto the mightiest to lift,  
Nor favors unto men whose skill had done  
Great works, nor riches ever unto one  
Wise man of understanding. All is drift  
Of time and chance, and none may stay or sift  
Or know the end of that which is begun.  
Who waits until the wind shall silent keep,  
Will never find the ready hour to sow.  
Who watcheth clouds will have no time to reap.  
At daydawn plant thy seed, and be not slow  
At night. God doth not slumber take nor sleep :  
Which seed shall prosper thou canst never know.

## SEPTEMBER.



HE golden-rod is yellow ;  
The corn is turning brown ;  
The trees in apple orchards  
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes  
Are curling in the sun ;  
In dusty pods the milkweed  
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest,  
In every meadow nook ;  
And asters by the brook-side  
Make asters in the brook.


From dewy lanes at morning  
The grapes' sweet odors rise ;  
At noon the roads all flutter  
With yellow butterflies.

By all these lovely tokens  
September days are here,  
With summer's best of weather,  
And autumn's best of cheer.

But none of all this beauty  
Which floods the earth and air  
Is unto me the secret  
Which makes September fair.

'T is a thing which I remember ;  
To name it thrills me yet :  
One day of one September  
I never can forget.

## APPEAL.

“ LOVE, whom I so love, in this sore strait  
Of thine, fall not ! Below thy very feet  
I kneel, so much I reverence thee, so  
sweet

It is to every pulse of mine to wait  
Thy lightest pleasure; and to bind my fate  
To thine by humblest service. Incomplete  
All heaven, Love, if there thou dost not greet  
Me, with perpetual need which I can sate,  
I and no other ! So I dare to pray  
To thee this prayer. It is not wholly prayer.  
The solemn worships of the ages lay  
Even on God a solemn bond. I dare, —  
Thy worshipper, thy lowly, loving mate, —  
I dare to say, O Love, thou must be great !”

## WRECK.

[By the laws of the Rhodians divers were allowed a share of the wreck in proportion to the depth to which they had gone in search of it.]



O many fathoms deep my sweet ship lies,  
No ripple marks the place. The gulls'  
white wings

Pause not ; the boatman idly sleeps or sings,  
Floating above ; and smile to smile, with skies  
That bend and shine, the sunny water vies.  
Too heavy freight, and of too costly things,  
My sweet ship bore. No tempest's mutterings  
Warned me ; but in clear noon, before my eyes  
She sudden faltered, rocked, and with each sail  
Full set, went down !

O Heart ! in diver's mail  
Wrap thee. Breathe not till, standing on her deck,  
Thou has confronted all thy loss and wreck.  
Poor coward Heart ! — thou dardest not plunge ? —  
For thee  
There lies no other pearl in any sea.

## THE HEART OF A ROSE.



ROSE like a hollow cup with a brim, —  
A brim as pink as the after-glow ;  
Deep down in its heart gold stamens swim,  
Tremble and swim in a sea of snow.

My Love set it safe in a crystal glass,  
Gently as petals float down at noon.  
Low, in a whisper, my Love's voice said :  
"Look quick ! In an hour it will be dead.  
I picked it because it will die so soon.  
Now listen, dear Heart, as the seconds pass,  
What the rose will say," my Love's voice said.

I look and I listen. The flushed pink brim  
Is still as June's warmest after-glow ;  
Silent as stars the gold stamens swim,  
Tremble and swim in their sea of snow.  
I dare not breathe on the crystal glass,  
Lest one sweet petal should fall too soon.  
False was the whisper my Love's voice said, —  
If he had not picked it, it had been dead ;  
But now it will live an eternal noon,  
And I shall hear as the seconds pass  
What the rose will say till I am dead.



## ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF.



DOST know Grief well? Hast known her  
long?

So long, that not with gift or smile,  
Or gliding footstep in the throng,  
She can deceive thee by her guile?

So long, that with unflinching eyes  
Thou smilest to thyself apart,  
To watch each flimsy, fresh disguise  
She plans to stab anew thy heart?

So long, thou barrest up no door  
To stay the coming of her feet?  
So long, thou answerest no more,  
Lest in her ear thy cry be sweet?

Dost know the voice in which she says,  
"No more henceforth our paths divide ;  
In loneliest nights, in crowded days,  
I am forever by thy side" ?

Then dost thou know, perchance, the spell  
The gods laid on her at her birth, —  
The viewless gods who mingle well  
Strange love and hate of us on earth.

Weapon and time, the hour, the place,  
All these are hers to take, to choose,  
To give us neither rest nor grace,  
Not one heart-throb to miss or lose.

All these are hers ; yet stands she, slave,  
Helpless before our one behest :  
The gods, that we be shamed not, gave,  
And locked the secret in our breast.

She to the gazing world must bear  
Our crowns of triumph, if we bid ;  
Loyal and mute, our colors wear,  
Sign of her own forever hid.

Smile to our smile, song to our song,  
With songs and smiles our roses fling,  
Till men turn round in every throng,  
To note such joyous pleasuring,

And ask, next morn, with eyes that lend  
A fervor to the words they say,  
“ What is her name, that radiant friend  
Who walked beside you yesterday ? ”

## FEALTY.



THE thing I count and hold as fealty —

The only fealty to give or take —

Doth never reckoning keep, and coldly  
make

Bond to itself with this or that to be

Content as wage ; the wage unpaid, to free

Its hand from service, and its love forsake,

Its faith cast off, as one from dreams might wake

At morn, and smiling watch the vision flee.

Such fealty is treason in disguise.

Who trusts it, his death-warrant sealed doth bear.

Love looks at it with angry, wondering eyes ;

Love knows the face true fealty doth wear,

The pulse that beats unchanged by alien air,

Or hurts, or crimes, until the loved one dies.

## VISION.



Y subtle secrets of discovered law  
Men well have measured the horizon's  
round,  
Kept record of the speed of light and  
sound,  
Have close defined by reasoning without flaw  
The utmost human vision ever saw  
Unaided, and have arrant sought and found  
Devices countless to extend its bound.  
Bootless their secrets all ! My eyes but stray  
To eastward, and majestic, bright, arise  
Peaks of a range which three days distant lies !  
And of the faces, too, that light my day  
Most clear, one is a continent away,  
The other shines above the farthest skies !

## THE POET'S FORGE.



He lies on his back, the idling smith,  
A lazy, dreaming fellow is he ;  
The sky is blue, or the sky is gray,  
He lies on his back the livelong day,  
Not a tool in sight ; say what they may,  
A curious sort of a smith is he.

The powers of the air are in league with him ;  
The country around believes it well ;  
The wondering folk draw spying near ;  
Never sight nor sound do they see or hear ;  
No wonder they feel a little fear ;  
When is it his work is done so well ?

Never sight nor sound to see or hear ;  
The powers of the air are in league with him ;  
High over his head his metals swing,  
Fine gold and silver to shame the king ;  
We might distinguish their glittering,  
If once we could get in league with him.

High over his head his metals swing ;  
He hammers them idly year by year,  
Hammers and chuckles a low refrain :  
“ A bench and book are a ball and chain,  
The adze is better tool than the plane ;  
What 's the odds between now and next year ? ”

Hammers and chuckles his low refrain,  
A lazy, dreaming fellow is he :  
When sudden, some day, his bells peal out,  
And men, at the sound, for gladness shout ;  
He laughs and asks what it 's all about ;  
Oh, a curious sort of smith is he !



VANITY OF VANITIES.



EE to the blossom, moth to the flame ;  
Each to his passion ; what 's in a name ?

Red clover 's sweetest, well the bee knows ;  
No bee can suck it ; lonely it blows.

Deep lies its honey, out of reach, deep ;  
What use in honey hidden to keep ?

Robbed in the autumn, starving for bread ;  
Who stops to pity a honey-bee dead ?

Star-flames are brightest, blazing the skies ;  
Only a hand's-breadth the moth-wing flies.

Fooled with a candle, scorched with a breath ;  
Poor little miller, a tawdry death !

Life is a honey, life is a flame ;  
Each to his passion ; what 's in a name ?

Swinging and circling, face to the sun,  
Brief little planet, how it doth run !

Bee-time and moth-time, add the amount ;  
White heat and honey, who keeps the count ?

Gone some fine evening, a spark out-tost !  
The world no darker for one star lost !

Bee to the blossom, moth to the flame ;  
Each to his passion ; what 's in a name ?



## MORN.



IN what a strange bewilderment do we  
Awake each morn from out the brief  
night's sleep.

Our struggling consciousness doth grope and  
creep

Its slow way back, as if it could not free

Itself from bonds unseen. Then Memory,

Like sudden light, outflashes from its deep

The joy or grief which it had last to keep

For us ; and by the joy or grief we see

The new day dawneth like the yesterday ;

We are unchanged ; our life the same we knew

Before. I wonder if this is the way

We wake from death's short sleep, to struggle  
through

A brief bewilderment, and in dismay

Behold our life unto our old life true.

## QUATRAINS.

## THE MONEY-SEEKER.



WHAT has he in this glorious world's domain?

Unreckoned loss which he counts up for gain,

Unreckoned shame, of which he feels no stain,  
Unreckoned dead he does not know were slain.

What things does he take with him when he dies?  
Nothing of all that he on earth did prize :  
Unto his grovelling feet and sordid eyes  
How difficult and empty seem the skies !

## THE LOVER.

HE knows the utmost secret of the earth :  
The golden sunrise's and sunset's worth ;  
The pregnancy of every blossom's birth ;  
The hidden name of every creature's mirth.

He knows all measures of the pulse's beat ;  
He knows all pathless paths of human feet ;  
He knows what angels know not of the sweet  
Fulfilments when love's being is complete.

He knows all deadly soils where poisons bloom ;  
He knows the fated road where joy makes room  
For nameless terrors and eternal gloom :  
God help him in his sad omniscient doom !

## RELEASE.



F one had watched a prisoner many a year,  
Standing behind a barrèd window-pane,  
Fettered with heavy handcuff and with  
chain,  
And gazing on the blue sky, far and clear ;  
And suddenly some morning he should hear  
The man had in the night contrived to gain  
His freedom and was safe, would this bring pain ?  
Ah ! would it not to dullest heart appear  
Good tidings ?

Yesterday I looked on one  
Who lay as if asleep in perfect peace.  
His long imprisonment for life was done.  
Eternity's great freedom his release  
Had brought. Yet they who loved him called him  
dead,  
And wept, refusing to be comforted.

## WHERE?



Y snowy eupatorium has dropped  
 Its silver threads of petals in the night ;  
 No signal told its blossoming had stopped ;  
 Its seed-films flutter silent, ghostly white :  
 No answer stirs the shining air,  
 As I ask, " Where ? "

Beneath the glossy leaves of winter green  
 Dead lily-bells lie low, and in their place  
 A rounded disk of pearly pink is seen,  
 Which tells not of the lily's fragrant grace :  
 No answer stirs the shining air,  
 As I ask, " Where ? "

This morning's sunrise does not show to me  
 Seed-film or fruit of my sweet yesterday ;  
 Like falling flowers, to realms I cannot see  
 Its moments floated silently away :  
 No answer stirs the shining air,  
 As I ask, " Where ? "

## EMIGRAVIT.



WITH sails full set, the ship her anchor weighs.  
Strange names shine out beneath her figure  
head.

What glad farewells with eager eyes are said !  
What cheer for him who goes, and him who stays !  
Fair skies, rich lands, new homes, and untried days  
Some go to seek ; the rest but wait instead  
Until the next stanch ship her flag doth raise.  
Who knows what myriad colonies there are  
Of fairest fields, and rich, undreamed-of gains  
Thick planted in the distant shining plains  
Which we call sky because they lie so far ?  
Oh, write of me, not " Died in bitter pains,"  
But " Emigrated to another star ! " .

## MY TENANTS.



NEVER had a title-deed  
To my estate. But little heed  
Eyes give to me, when I walk by  
My fields, to see who occupy.  
Some clumsy men who lease and hire  
And cut my trees to feed their fire,  
Own all the land that I possess,  
And tax my tenants to distress.  
And if I said I had been first,  
And, reaping, left for them the worst,  
That they were beggars at the hands  
Of dwellers on my royal lands,  
With idle laugh of passing scorn  
As unto words of madness born,  
They would reply.

I do not care ;  
They cannot crowd the charmèd air ;  
They cannot touch the bonds I hold  
On all that they have bought and sold.  
They can waylay my faithful bees,  
Who, lulled to sleep, with fatal ease,

Are robbed. Is one day's honey sweet  
Thus snatched? All summer round my feet  
In golden drifts from plummy wings,  
In shining drops on fragrant things,  
Free gift, it came to me. My corn,  
With burnished banners, morn by morn,  
Comes out to meet and honor me ;  
The glittering ranks spread royally  
Far as I walk. When hasty greed  
Tramples it down for food and seed,  
I, with a certain veiled delight,  
Hear half the crop is lost by blight.

Letter of law these may fulfil,  
Plant where they like, slay what they will,  
Count up their gains and make them great ;  
Nevertheless, the whole estate  
Always belongs to me and mine.  
We are the only royal line.  
And though I have no title-deed  
My tenants pay me loyal heed  
When our sweet fields I wander by  
To see what strangers occupy.



THE STORY OF BOON.<sup>1</sup>

It haunts my thoughts morn, night, and  
noon,

The story of the woman, Boon, —

Haunts me like restless ghost, until

I give myself to do its will ;

Cries voiceless, yet as voices cry, —

“O singer, can this tale pass by

Untold by thee? Thy heart is wrung

In vain, if dies the song unsung.”

I am unworthy : master hands

Should strike the chords, and fill the lands

From sea to sea with melody

All reverent, yet with harmony

Majestic, jubilant, to tell

How love must love, if love loves well ;

How once incarnate love was found

On earth, dishonored, martyr-crowned,

Crowned by a heathen woman's name, —

O blessed Boon, of peerless fame !

<sup>1</sup> This story of Boon is strictly true. It is told by Mrs. Leonowens, the English Governess at the Siamese court. She took it down from Choy's own lips.

In Siam's court the Buddhist King  
Held festival. Fair girls to sing,  
And dance, and play, were led between  
Close ranks of Amazons in green  
And gold. In chariot milk-white  
Of ivory, and glittering bright  
With flowers garlanded, rode Choy,  
The young, the beautiful ; with joy  
And subtle pride no words could tell,  
Her virgin bosom rose and fell.  
No dream the Siam maiden knew  
More high or blest than that which grew  
In Choy's poor blinded heart, — to be  
The favorite of the King, and see  
The other wives beneath her feet.  
From babyhood, that this was sweet  
The child was taught. How should she know  
They told her false, and worked her woe !

The song, the dance, the play, were done,  
Choy's fatal triumph had been won.  
The old king's bleared and lustful eyes  
Had marked her for his next new prize.  
Asking her name, as low she bowed  
Before the throne, he called aloud, —  
“ Which of my nobles springs to lead  
Her chariot ponies ? Do I need  
Speak farther ? ”

On the instant, two  
Young nobles robed in white sprang through

The crowd, and kneeling as to queen,  
With low-bent head and reverent mien,  
They walked the chariot beside.  
The bands burst forth in swelling tide  
Of music, and the curtain fell.  
One noble, smitten by the spell  
Of Choy's great beauty, whispered, "God,  
How beautiful thou art !"

"My Lord,  
Have care," the scornful Choy exclaimed :  
"T were ill for thee, if thou wert blamed  
By me."

The other noble silent gazed,  
With eyes whose glance strange tumult raised  
Within Choy's breast. He did not speak :  
All spoken words had fallen weak,  
After his look. Yet Choy's heart burned  
To hear his voice. Sudden she turned,  
And leaning forward said, "How now,  
What seest thou in air that thou  
Art dumb?"

With trembling lips he spoke, —  
"O Lady, till thy sweet voice broke  
Upon the air, I thought I saw  
An angel ; now, with no less awe,  
But greater joy, I see thou art  
A woman."

Ah, they know not heart

Of man or woman, who declare  
That love needs time to love and dare.  
His altars wait, — not day nor name,  
Only the touch of sacred flame.

The song, the dance, the play were done.  
Oh, fatal triumph Choy had won !  
Oh, hateful life she thought was sweet !  
She knelt before the old king's feet,  
A slave, a toy, a purchased thing,  
Which to his worn-out sense might bring  
Pleasure again of touch, of sight.  
Doting, he named her "Chorm," "Delight,"  
Decked her with jewels, gave her power,  
And day and night, and hour by hour,  
With hideous caresses sought  
Joy in the thing which he had bought.  
And hour by hour, and night and day,  
Wasted poor Choy's young life away.  
One thrilling voice, one glowing face,  
One thought of such a love's embrace,  
Haunted her thoughts, and racked her breast,  
Robbed her of peace, robbed her of rest,  
Made of her life such living lie,  
Such torture, she but prayed to die.

Months passed, and she knew not the name  
Of him she loved. At last there came

The fated day. A woman slave,  
New in the palace, quickly gave,  
Answering Choy's artful questioning,  
The noble's name.

“Ah, go and bring  
Me news of him,” said Choy. “He bore  
Himself so loftily, I more  
Recall him than all else that day.  
Seek out minutely in what way  
He lives ; what may his harem hold.  
He seemed to me so silent, cold,  
No doubt some Houri keeps him chained,”  
With scornful laugh, but poorly feigned,  
Cried Choy.

At dusk of night returned  
The slave, with wondrous tale, which burned  
Itself on Choy's glad heart.

The Duke,  
Phaya Phi Chitt his name, forsook  
His harem on the day he led  
The Favorite's chariot ponies. Dead  
He seemed to all he once had loved :  
No fear, no joy, his spirit moved.  
His friends believed that he was mad,  
Or else some mortal illness had.  
A feverish joy filled all Choy's thought,  
She knew by what this change was wrought.  
Love's keenest pain, if shared like this,  
No longer seemed a pain, but bliss.

Again the faithful slave she sent,  
With message of one word, which meant  
But "I remember."

"I love much,"

The Duke sent back. Ah, madness such  
As this was never seen. The halls  
Of tyrants' palaces have walls  
Higher than Love's and Hope's last breath,  
Wider than Life, deeper than Death !

Embroidered with a thread of gold  
On silk, and hidden fold on fold,  
As if an amulet she wore,  
Her lover's name the poor Choy bore  
By night, by day, upon her heart.  
The new slave woman, with an art  
As tender as a sister's, sought  
To comfort her. Each day she brought  
New message from the Duke, each night  
Lay at her mistress' feet till light.  
O Buddha ! pitiful, divine,  
All-seeing, gav'st thou no sign  
To warn these faithful, loving three,  
Who were as faithful unto thee  
As to each other ! Didst thou teach  
The cruel tyrant how to reach  
Their life blood, that thy arm might save  
Them by the surety of the grave ?

Might give to their expiring breath  
The gift of life, in shape of death?  
Ah, Buddha ! pitiful, divine,  
Thy gifts of death record no sign  
Of life beyond. Our weak hearts crave  
Some voice of surety for the grave.

The hours grew ripe : the hour was set,  
The night had come. Choy slumbered yet,  
While faithful Boon, with footsteps light,  
Made all things ready for their flight.  
Sudden a clash of arms, — a gleam  
Of fire of torches ! From her dream  
Choy waked, and on her threshold saw,  
Dread sight which chilled her blood with awe,  
Standing with panting voice and breath,  
Mai Taïe, Mother of Death,  
Cruellest of all the Amazons,  
Slayer of all convicted ones  
Who braved the tyrant's wrath and hate.  
Choy called on Boon. Too late ! too late !  
Boon fettered lay with gag and chain ;  
Most piteous eyes, faithful in pain,  
Unto her mistress lifting still.  
With blows and jeers wreaking their will,  
The soldier women, fierce and strong,  
Dragged weeping Choy and Boon along  
The by-ways of the silent town,  
And flung them, chained and helpless, down

Into a dark and loathsome cell.  
Soon as their footsteps' echoes fell  
Faintly afar, Choy whispered low, —  
“O Boon, dear Boon ! tell me hast thou  
Confessed?”

“Dear Lady, no !” she cried.  
“No tortures tyrants ever tried  
Shall wring from me one word of blame  
Against Phaya Phi Chitt's dear name.”  
That instant, flashing through Choy's heart  
Strange instinct swept.

“Tell me who art  
Thou, Boon,” she said : “why dost thou cling  
To me through all this suffering?  
All other women I have known  
Had left me now to die alone.  
O Boon, conceal from me no more !  
Tell me the truth in this dread hour !”  
Then, looking newly at her face,  
She saw it beauty had, and grace ;  
Saw that the feet were lithe and fine,  
The hands were small and smooth : each sign  
Of tender nurture and high blood  
This loving woman bore, who stood  
To her as slave. Unearthly sweet  
Grew Boon's pale face, as to the feet  
Of Choy, all crippled, chained, she crept,  
And, as she strove to speak, but wept



And sobbed,—

“O Lady dear, forgive  
That I deceived thee ! I but live  
For thy dear Duke. I am his wife !”  
Dumb wonder sealed Choy’s lips. A strife  
Of fierce mistrust warred in her breast.  
At last, stern-faced, “Tell me the rest,”  
She said.

Closer, more humbly still  
Boon crept, and said, —

“Lady, I will ;  
And, by the heart of Buddha, thou  
Canst but forgive when thou dost know  
The whole.

“The day my husband came  
Home from the fête, he spoke thy name  
And told thy beauty unto me,  
And said that from that moment he,  
His thought, his heart, his blood, were thine, —  
Thine utterly, and no more mine  
Again. What could I do but weep ?  
I saw him pine. No food, no sleep,  
He took. I thought that he must die.  
What could I do ? O Lady, I  
So loved him that I longed as he  
That fate might give him joy and thee.  
I vowed to him that I would win  
Thee for his wife. How to begin

I knew not, when I found thou wert  
The King's last favorite. It hurt  
My pride to be a slave. The gold  
Lies in the sea for which I sold  
Myself to thee, rather than break  
My vow. But easy for his sake,  
I loved him so, thy service came,  
Soon as I found that his dear name  
Was dear to thee as thine to him ;  
That, when I spoke it, it could dim  
Thine eyes with passion's tears, like those  
Which he had shed in passion's throes,  
For want of thee. O Lady, none  
Of all thy sighs and tears, not one,  
But I have flown and faithful told,  
That he might know thou wert not cold.  
Each word of beauty, nobleness,  
Which thou didst speak, I bore to bless  
His heart with knowledge more complete  
Of thee. O Lady, the deceit  
Was only for his precious sake  
And thine : no other way to take  
I knew. My husband is so great,  
So good, I was but humble mate  
For him. As shadow follows shape,  
My heart in life cannot escape  
From following his ; nor yet in death  
Shall it be changed : with dying breath,

From Buddha I one joy will wrest,  
That he find rapture in thy breast."  
Boon ceased, and in her slender hands,  
Which scarce could lift her fetter bands,  
Buried her face. Choy did not speak.  
Her reverence knew not where to seek  
For fitting words which she might dare  
To use to Boon. The midnight air  
Heard only sobs, as close between  
Her arms she drew Boon's head to lean  
Upon her breast. The long night waned,  
And still in silence sat the chained  
And helpless women. Strange thoughts filled  
The heart of Choy. Her love seemed chilled,  
Poor, and untrue, beside this one  
Great deed she never could have done.  
"Ah, me ! his wife has loved him best,"  
In bitterness her heart confessed,  
Yet jealousy for shame was dead.  
Her tears fell loving on Boon's head :  
" Dear Boon," she whispered soft and low,  
" To Buddha pitiful we go."

Next morning when the judges dread  
Cross-questioned Boon, she simply said,  
" My Lords, what can a poor slave know ? "  
Weary at last, the fearful blow  
Of lashes on her naked feet  
They ordered. Blood ran down the sweet

Soft flesh : still came the answer low,  
“ My Lords, what can a poor slave know?  
Be pitiful ! ” The swift blows fell  
Again : no cry, no sound, to tell  
That it was pain, Boon gave ; no sign  
Of faltering. They poured down wine  
To stay her strength, and then again, —  
Oh, surely fiends they were, not men ! —  
Again, from slender neck to waist,  
The cutting blows in angry haste  
With tenfold violence they laid.  
Each blow a line of red blood made ;  
Yet, when they paused, the answer came  
Steadfast, heroic, in the same  
Pathetic words, more feeble, slow,  
“ My Lords, what can a poor slave know ? ”  
Then in the torture of the screw,  
Whose pain has led strong men to do  
Dishonor to their souls and God,  
They bound this woman’s hands. Sweat stood  
In bloody drops along her brow,  
Yet from her lips not even now  
Was heard one syllable.

In rage,

The baffled tyrants to assuage  
Her sufferings tried every art  
Which could be tried by kindest heart,  
And snatched her back from death again,  
Again to tortures fresh ; in vain !

Night came, and from her lips no word  
Had fallen. All night they faintly stirred,  
As if in sleep she dreamed and spoke.  
Choy watching, weeping by her, took  
Her hand, and said, —

“ Oh, tell thy Choy,  
Art thou in mortal pain ? ”

“ My joy  
Is greater than my pain,” she said,  
“ That this poor flesh hath not betrayed  
My love. Thanking great Buddha now,  
I pray unceasing, till we go  
Again to torture.” Then no more  
Boon spoke. To Choy, but little lower  
Than angel she appeared. Ah ! true  
It was the wife loved best ! Love knew  
His own. His angels comforted  
Her soul with joy through hours which bred  
But anguish in Choy’s breast.

Too soon  
Came cruel day, and brought to Boon  
Again the lash, the screw ; again  
Unto the door of death in vain  
They tortured her : no word escaped  
Her bloodless lips. Her face seemed shaped  
Of iron, so calm, so resolute ;  
A superhuman light her mute  
And upward gaze transfigured, till  
In awe the torturers stood still.

Then, binding up her wounds, they laid  
Her on a couch to rest. New shade  
Of anguish now her face revealed,  
Waiting Choy's words. All unconcealed,  
No doubt, the weaker love lay bare  
Before her instinct. It could dare  
For self: now that for self remained  
No hope, no future to be gained,  
Could it for him be true, be great?  
Ah, this true torture was, — to wait  
Another woman's courage! Eyes  
Of fire Boon fixed on Choy. To rise  
She helpless strove, in impulse vain,  
As if by touch she could sustain  
Choy's strength. Her gaze was like a cry.  
"Oh, what is death, is suffering, by  
The side of truth? If thou dost love  
Another, thought of self can move  
Thee not. If thou dost love, to bear  
The worst is nothing. Dost thou dare  
Betray, thou art a coward, liar!"  
Entreated, warned Boon's eyes of fire.  
They held Choy's eyes as by a spell.  
Feeble the judges' stern tones fell,  
Idle the threats of torture seemed,  
Beside the scorching look which gleamed  
Upon that woman's face.

Thus stayed  
And stung, Choy bore the blows which laid

Her quivering flesh in furrows. Feet  
And neck and shoulders, all the sweet  
Fair skin was torn : her blood ran down  
As Boon's had run, — not of her own  
Resolve, but born of Boon's the strength  
Which silent sealed her lips. At length  
The one sure pain which torturers know  
They tried. No rack, no fire, no blow,  
Is dreadful as the screw. At first  
Sharp turn it gave, a loud cry burst  
From Choy, —

“ O Boon, forgive, forgive !  
I cannot bear this pain, and live ! ”  
And, shrieking out her lover's name,  
She cowered before Boon's eyes of flame.  
One cry of uttermost despair  
From Boon rang out upon the air,  
Her fettered arms above her head  
She lifted, and fell back as dead.  
Ah ! true it was, the wife loved best !  
How true, that cry of Choy's confessed.  
To love which she had so betrayed,  
No prayer she for forgiveness made :  
On him whom she had thought her life  
She called not, but upon his wife.

Swift sped the feet of them who sought  
The lover. Ere the noon, they brought

Him also. Boon, with anguished eyes,  
Beheld him there. She could not rise,  
But, creeping on her hands and feet,  
She cried, in tones unearthly sweet, —  
“O Lords ! O Judges ! look at me,  
And listen. It was I, not he.  
I am his wife. I laid the plot.  
Except for me, the thought had not  
Been his. 'T was only I deceived  
The Lady Choy. He but believed  
What I desired. The guilt is mine,  
All mine. 'Tell them it was not thine,  
My husband, — I can bear the whole.”  
And, as she turned to him, the soul  
Of love ineffable set smile  
Upon her face. Her piteous guile,  
Transparent, thrilled each heart and ear  
That heard her pleading voice. A tear  
Fell from the sternest Amazon,  
Fierce Khoon Thow App, as in a tone  
No mortal from her lips had heard  
Before, she said, “O Boon, what stirred  
Thy heart to this? Thy motive tell !”  
The question all unanswered fell.  
Boon lay again as if in death,  
With closed eyes and gasping breath.

All night, low on the dark cell's floor,  
Lay Boon and Choy ; for Boon no more



Remained in life. When Choy crept near,  
And humbly spoke, she answered, "Dear,  
Farewell!" — no other word. Choy strove, —  
Poor Choy! her feebleness, lesser love  
Avenging on herself its sin, —  
Strove from the greater love to win  
Some healing stay. Too sweet to pain,  
Too loyal and too true to feign,  
Boon made but one reply, which fell  
Fainter and fainter, "Dear, farewell!"

That night, at midnight, sat the King  
And Lords in council. For the thing  
Phaya Phi Chitt and Choy had planned,  
Scarcely in all that cruel land  
Was known a punishment which seemed  
Sufficient. Fierce his red wrath gleamed,  
As cried the King, —


"At dawn shall fly  
The vultures with their hungry cry.  
Rare feast for them ready by noon  
Shall be: three traitors' bodies hewn  
In pieces, and with offal cast  
Abroad, that to the very last  
Low grade of life they may return,  
And grovel with the beasts to learn,  
Through countless ages, in what way  
Kings punish when their slaves betray.

Long generations shall forget  
Their base-born names, ere souls are set  
Again within their foul, false flesh,  
To murder love and trust afresh !”<sup>1</sup>

Ah ! true it was, the wife loved best !  
Love knew his own, gave her his rest ;  
And, to the other woman, doom  
Of life-long woe and life-long gloom.  
O cruel friends who prayed the King,  
Who dreamed Choy to this world could cling !  
Reprieved from death, to life condemned,  
Sad prisoner forever hemmed  
Within the hated palace-wall ;  
By all despised, and shunned by all,  
Lonely and broken-hearted, she  
Weeps day and night in misery.  
And day and night one picture haunts  
Her weary brain, her sorrow taunts, —  
Picture of Buddha’s fairest fields,  
Where every hour new transport yields,  
And where the lover whom she slew,  
Loyal at last, and glad and true,  
In full Elysium’s perfect rest,  
Walks with the one who loved him best !

<sup>1</sup> The Siamese believe that, whenever a dead body is not burned, its soul is condemned to begin life again in the lowest animal form.

It haunts me morn, and night, and noon :  
This story of the woman, Boon, —  
Haunts me like restless ghost, that says, —  
“ Oh, where is love in these sad days !  
Rise up, and in my might and name  
Plead for the altar and the flame.”  
I am unworthy : master hands  
Should strike the chords, and fill the lands  
From sea to sea with melody  
Of such transcendent harmony  
That it all jubilant might tell  
How love must love, if love loves well.  
Yet, telling all, and flooding lands  
With melody, the master hands  
Could strike no deeper chord than I,  
When from a woman's heart I cry, —  
“ O martyred Boon, of peerless fame,  
Incarnate in thy life, Love came !”



## THE VICTORY OF PATIENCE.



ARMED of the gods ! Divinest conqueror !  
What soundless hosts are thine ! Nor  
pomp, nor state,  
Nor token, to betray where thou dost wait.  
All Nature stands, for thee, ambassador ;  
Her forces all thy serfs, for peace or war.  
Greatest and least alike, thou rul'st their fate, —  
The avalanche chained until its century's date,  
The mulberry leaf made robe for emperor !  
Shall man alone thy law deny ? — refuse  
Thy healing for his blunders and his sins ?  
Oh, make us thine ! Teach us who waits best sues ;  
Who longest waits of all most surely wins.  
When Time is spent, Eternity begins.  
To doubt, to chafe, to haste, doth God accuse.

## GOD'S LIGHT-HOUSES.



WHEN night falls on the earth, the sea  
From east to west lies twinkling bright  
With shining beams from beacons high  
Which flash afar a friendly light.

The sailor's eyes, like eyes in prayer,  
Turn unto them for guiding ray :  
If storms obscure their radiance,  
The great ships helpless grope their way.

When night falls on the earth, the sky  
Looks like a wide, a boundless main.  
Who knows what voyagers sail there ?  
Who names the ports they seek and gain ?

Are not the stars like beacons set  
To guide the argosies that go  
From universe to universe,  
Our little world above, below ? —

On their great errands solemn bent,  
In their vast journeys unaware  
Of our small planet's name or place  
Revolving in the lower air.

O thought too vast ! O thought too glad !  
An awe most rapturous it stirs.  
From world to world God's beacons shine :  
God means to save his mariners !

## SONGS OF BATTLE.



LD as the world — no other things so old ;  
Nay, older than the world, else, how had  
sprung

Such lusty strength in them when earth  
was young? —

Stand valor and its passion hot and bold,  
Insatiate of battle. How, else, told  
Blind men, born blind, that red was fitting tongue  
Mute, eloquent, to show how trumpets rung  
When armies charged and battle-flags unrolled?  
Who sings of valor speaks for life, for death,  
Beyond all death, and long as life is life,  
In rippled waves the eternal air his breath  
Eternal bears to stir all noble strife.  
Dead Homer from his lost and vanished grave  
Keeps battle glorious still and soldiers brave.

## NO MAN'S LAND.



HO called it so? What accident  
The wary phase devised?  
What wandering fancy thither went,  
And lingered there surprised?

Ah, no man's land ! O sweet estate  
Illimitably fair !  
No measure, wall, or bar or gate.  
Secure as sky or air.

No greed, no gain ; not sold or bought,  
Unmarred by name or brand,  
Not dreamed of or desired or sought,  
Nor visioned, " no man's land."

Suns set and rise, and rise and set,  
Whole summers come and go ;  
And winters pay the summer's debt,  
And years of west wind blow ;



And harvests of wild seed-times fill,  
And seed and fill again ;  
And blossoms bloom at blossoms' will,  
By blossoms overlain ;

And day and night, and night and day,  
Uncounted suns and moons,  
By silent shadows mark and stay  
Unreckoned nights and noons :

Ah, " no man's land," hast thou a lover,  
Thy wild, sweet charm who sees?  
The stars look down ; the birds fly over ;  
Art thou alone with these ?

Ah, " no man's land," when died thy lover,  
Who left no trace to tell?  
Thy secret we shall not discover ;  
The centuries keep it well !

## JUST OUT OF SIGHT.

## I.



IN idle reverie, one winter's day,  
I watched the narrow vista of a street,  
Where crowds of men with noisy, hurry-  
ing feet

And eager eyes went on their restless way.  
Idly I noted where the boundary lay,  
At which the distance did my vision cheat,  
Past which each figure fading fast did fleet,  
And seem to meet and vanish in the gray.  
Sudden there came to me a thought, oft told,  
But newly shining then like flash of light, —  
“This death, the dread of which turns us so cold,  
Outside of our own fears has no stronghold ;  
'T is but a boundary, past which, in white,  
Our friends are walking still, just out of sight !”

## II.

“Just out of sight !” Ay, truly, that is all !  
Take comfort in the words, and be deceived  
All ye who can, or have not been bereaved !  
“Just out of sight.” 'T is easy to recall

A face, a voice. O foolish words, and small  
And bitter cheer ! Men have all this believed,  
And yet, in agony, to death have grieved,  
For one "just out of sight," beneath a pall !  
"Just out of sight." It means the whole of woe :  
One sudden stricken blind who loved the light ;  
One starved where he had feasted day and night ;  
One who was crowned, to beggary brought low ;  
All this death doeth, going to and fro  
And putting those we love "just out of sight."

## SEPTEMBER WOODS.



IRT round by meadows wearing shabby  
weeds

For clover's early death, and sentried by  
The tireless locust, with his muffled click  
Of secret weapon, at each footfall, stand  
The woods.

September, smiling treacherous smiles,  
And bearing in his hand a hollow truce  
Which gentle Summer trusts, can enter free.  
O fatal trust! Her sacred inner court  
Of Holies, holiest, the lovely queen  
Throws open to the ally of her foe.  
By day, with sunny look and gracious air  
He wins her heart and wears her colors. Night  
Beholds him, in his white and gleaming mail,  
Alert and noiseless, following the dews,  
Her faithful messengers, waylaying them  
With sudden cruel death, and, in their stead,  
His own foul treason bearing through the realm.  
Lured by his guile, the green and twining vines  
Array themselves in party-colored robes  
And loosely flaunt, unknowing 't is their death.

The low Bunch-Berry her nun's white lays by,  
And wearing claret satin, decks her breast  
With knots of scarlet beads. This sin, O sweet,  
In resurrection of the coming Spring,  
Shall be forgiven thee, and thou again  
Shalt rise, as white as snow.

The fragrant ferns,  
And clinging mosses, to whom Summer kind  
Had been, more than to other lowly things,  
Are true ; and not till they are trampled low  
By icy warriors, will they refuse  
Their emerald carpet to her tread, and then,  
In cold white grief, will die around her feet :  
The simpering Birch, unstable in the wind,  
Is first to break his faith, and cheaply bought  
By gold, in brazen vanity, lifts up  
His arms, and broadly waves the glittering price  
Of his dishonor : Poplars next and Elms  
Grow envious of the yellow show, and hold  
Their hands for traitor's wages ; but more scant  
And dim the golden tokens gained by them ;  
For now disloyalty has spread, and grown  
More bold of front : whole clans are cheaply won.  
In hostile signal fires from hill to hill,  
The Maples blaze ; the tangling Sumach-trees  
Of glowing spikes build crimson ladders up  
The wall ; ungainly Moosewood strives and creeps  
And shakes his purple-spotted banner out  
Defiantly ; the sturdy Beeches throw

Their harvest down, and bristle in a suit  
Of leathern points : all is revolt, and all  
Is lost for Summer !

Vainly now she showers  
By brook and pool her white and purple stars,  
And lifts in all the fields her Golden-Rod ;  
In vain thin scarlet streamers sets along  
The meadows, and to Gentian's pallid lips  
Of blue calls back the chilled and torpid bee ;  
Sweet queen, her kingdom rocks ! Her only stay  
And comfort now, the loving Pines who wait  
In solemn grief, unmoved and undismayed  
By guile or threats, and to their farthest kin,  
A haughty and untarnished race, will keep  
Eternally inviolate and green  
Their sworn allegiance to her and all  
Her name ! Encircled by their arms she dies ;  
And not the deadliest thrusts of wintry spears,  
Nor sweeping avalanche of snow and ice,  
Can daunt them from their silent watch around  
Her sepulchre, nor from their faithful hold  
Can wrest the babe, who, hid in sacred depths  
And fed on sacred food, and nurtured till  
The fated day, shall lift her infant hand,  
And slaying the usurper, take the throne  
Next in the royal line of summer queens.

## TO-DAY.



SADDEST prisoner, to death condemned,  
Going blindfold, with slow, reluctant feet,  
Hands fettered and mute lips, thy doom  
to meet,

By flaming swords before, behind thee, hemmed,  
Led by two Fates, — To-morrow, with her gemmed  
Arms that flash mocking tokens of the sweet  
Things thou hadst hoped ; and Yesterday with cheat  
Of withered roses which thou hast contemned,  
Decking her icy brow and heavy pall ;  
While we, mute, helpless, with prophetic black  
Have wrapped ourselves, and in thy narrow track  
Come, hand in hand, blindfolded, fettered all,  
Waiting the hour when, in thy death's last thrall  
Bidding us follow thee, thou shalt look back.

## OPPORTUNITY.



DO not know if, climbing some steep hill,  
Through fragrant wooded pass, this glimpse  
I bought,  
Or whether in some mid-day I was caught  
To upper air, where visions of God's will  
In pictures to our quickened sense fulfil  
His word. But this I saw.

A path I sought  
Through wall of rock. No human fingers wrought  
The golden gates which opened sudden, still,  
And wide. My fear was hushed by my delight.  
Surpassing fair the lands ; my path lay plain ;  
Alas, so spell-bound, feasting on the sight,  
I paused, that I but reached the threshold bright,  
When, swinging swift, the golden gates again  
Were rocky wall, by which I wept in vain.



## FLOWERS ON A GRAVE.

## I.



HAT sweeter thing to hear, through tears,  
than this,  
Of one who dies, that, looking on him  
dead,

All men with tender reverence gazed and said :  
“ What courtesy and gentleness were his !  
Our ruder lives, for years to come, will miss  
His sweet serenity, which daily shed  
A grace we scarcely felt, so deep inbred  
Of nature was it. Loyalty which is  
So loyal as his loyalty to friends  
Is rare ; such purity is rarer still.”  
Yes, there is yet one sweeter thing. It ends  
The broken speech with sobs that choke and fill  
Our throats.

Alas ! lost friend, we knew not how  
Our hearts were won to love thee, until now.

## II.

SOME lives are bright like torches, and their flame  
Casts flickering lights around, and changeful heats ;  
Some lives blaze like the meteor which fleets  
Across the sky ; and some of lofty aim

Stand out like beacon-lights. But never came,  
Or can, a light so satisfying sweet,  
As steady daylight, unperturbed, complete,  
And noiseless.

Human lives we see the same  
As this ; their equilibrium so just,  
Their movement so serene, so still, small heed  
The world pays to their presence till in need  
It sudden finds itself. The darkness near,  
The precious life returning dust for dust,  
It recollects how noon and life were clear.

## III.

How poor is all that fame can be or bring !  
Although a generation feed the pyre,  
How soon dies out the lifeless, loveless fire !  
The king is dead. Hurrah ! Long live the king !  
The poet breathes his last. Who next will sing ?  
The great man falls. Who comes to mount still  
higher ?

Oh, bitter emptiness of such desire !  
Earth holds but one true good, but one true thing,  
And this is it — to walk in honest ways  
And patient, and with all one's heart belong  
In love unto one's own ! No death so strong  
That life like this he ever conquers, slays ;  
The centuries do to it no hurt, no wrong :  
They are eternal resurrection days.

## A MEASURE OF HOURS.



UNTO those two I called who hold  
In hands omnipotent all lives  
Of men, and deal, like gods, such doled  
Alms as they list, to him who strives  
And him who waits alike :

“ Oh ! show  
Me but how measure ye one hour  
Of time, that I at least may know  
If I lift up this cross what power  
I need ; and what I win of bliss  
If I may dare to pay the cost —  
Whole cost, without which I must miss  
This joy, and feel my life lost.”  
Then Joy spoke first, all breathless :

“ Drink !

An hour seems like eternity.  
My moments hold whole ages. Think  
No price too great which buys for thee  
This boundless bliss. Such hours as mine

Mock reckonings. The sands stand still.  
Drink quickly ! I will give the sign  
When it is over. Drink thy fill ! ”

I had scarce tasted when, with face  
All changed and voice grown sharp, Joy cried :  
“Thine hour is past. Give place ! Give place !  
New hearts impatiently abide  
Thy going. Every man fills up  
His own swift measure. Thou hadst thine.  
Who weakly drains the empty cup  
Drinks only bitter dregs of wine.”

Then Sorrow whispered gently : “Take  
This burden up. Be not afraid.  
An hour is short. Thou scarce wilt wake  
To consciousness that I have laid  
My hand upon thee, when the hour  
Shall all have passed, and, gladder then  
For the brief pain’s uplifting power,  
Thou shalt but pity griefless men.”

I grew by minutes changed and old,  
As men change not in many years  
Of happiness. Lifetimes untold  
Seemed dragging lifeless by. My tears  
Ran slow for utter weariness  
Of weeping ; and, when token came

The hour was done, I felt far less  
Of joy than woe ; as one whose name  
Is called, when prison doors have swung  
Open too late, reluctantly  
Goes forth to find himself among  
Strange faces, desolate, though free.

“ O cruel brethren, Joy and Grief,”  
I cried, “ with equal mockery  
Your promises meet our belief.  
One blossom and one fruit will be  
Your harvest ! But full well I know  
They are not harvest ; only seed  
Sown in our tears, from which shall grow  
In other soil harvest indeed, —

“ Harvest in God’s great gardens white,  
Where cool and living waters run,  
And where the spotless Lamb is light,  
Instead of pallid moon and sun ;  
Where constant through the golden air  
The tree of life sheds mystic leaf,  
Which angels to the nations bear,  
Healing alike their joy and grief.”

## CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

## I.



UT yesterday it was. Long years ago  
It seems. The world so altered looks  
to-day

That, journeying idly with my thoughts astray,  
I gazed where rose one lofty peak of snow  
Above grand tiers on tiers of peaks below.  
One moment brief it shone, then sank away,  
As swift we reached a point where foot-hills lay  
So near they seemed like mountains huge to grow,  
And touch the sky. That instant, idly still,  
My eye fell on a printed line, and read  
Incredulous, with sudden anguished thrill,  
The name of this great queen among the dead.  
I raised my eyes. The dusty foot-hills near  
Had gone. Again the snowy peak shone clear.

## II.

OH! thou beloved woman, soul and heart  
And life, thou standest unapproached and grand,  
As still that glorious snowy peak doth stand.  
The dusty barrier our clumsy art

In terror hath called death holds thee apart  
From us. 'Tis but the low foot-hill of sand  
Which bars our vision in a mountain-land.  
One moment further on, and we shall start  
With speechless joy to find that we have passed  
The dusky mound which shuts us from the light  
Of thy great love, still quick and warm and fast,  
Of thy great strengths, heroically cast,  
Of thy great soul, still glowing pure and white,  
Of thy great life, still pauseless, full, and bright !

## DEDICATION.



SAW men kneeling where their hands  
had brought

And fashioned curiously a pile of stone.

To God they said they gave it, for his own,  
And that their psalms and prayers had wrought  
Its consecration. When, perplexed, I sought  
Their meaning, they but answered with a groan,  
And called my question blasphemy. Alone,  
In silence of the wilderness, I thought  
Again. Swift answer came from rock, tree, sod :  
“ These puny prayers superfluous rise, and late  
These psalms. When first the world swung out in  
space,  
Amid the shoutings of the sons of God,  
Then was its every atom dedicate,  
Forever holy by God’s gift and grace.”



## DAWN.



WITH a ring of silver,  
And a ring of gold,  
And a red, red rose  
Which illumines her face,  
The sun, like a lover  
Who glows and is bold,  
Wooes the lovely earth  
To his strong embrace.

## EVE.



IN millions of pieces  
The beautiful rings  
And the scattered petals  
Of the rose so red,  
The sun, like a lover  
Who is weary, flings  
On the lonely earth  
When the day is dead.

## DREAMS.



MYSTERIOUS shapes, with wands of joy  
and pain,  
Which seize us unaware in helpless sleep,  
And lead us to the houses where we keep  
Our secrets hid, well barred by every chain  
That we can forge and bind : the crime whose stain  
Is slowly fading 'neath the tears we weep ;  
Dead bliss which, dead, can make our pulses leap —  
Oh, cruelty ! To make these live again !  
They say that death is sleep, and heaven's rest  
Ends earth's short day, as, on the last faint gleam  
Of sun, our nights shut down, and we are blest.  
Let this, then, be of heaven's joy the test,  
The proof if heaven be, or only seem,  
That we forever choose what we will dream !

THE DAY-STAR IN THE EAST.

I.



ACH morning, in the eastern sky, I see  
The star that morning dares to call its  
own.

Night's myriads it has outwatched and  
outshone ;

Full radiant dawn pales not its majesty ;  
Peer of the sun, his herald fit and free.  
Sudden from earth, dark, heavy mists are blown ;  
The city's grimy smoke, to pillars grown,  
Climbs up the sky, and hides the star from me.  
Strange, that a film of smoke can blot a star !  
On comes, with blinding glare, the breathless day :  
The star is gone. The moon doth surer lay  
Than midnight gloom, athwart its light, a bar.  
But steadfast as God's angels planets are.  
To-morrow's dawn will show its changeless ray.

II.

THE centuries are God's days ; within his hand,  
Held in the hollow, as a balance swings,  
Less than its dust, are all our temporal things.  
Long are his nights, when darkness steeps the land ;

Thousands of years fill one slow dawn's demand ;  
The human calendar its measure brings,  
Feeble and vain, to lift the soul that clings  
To hope for light, and seeks to understand.  
The centuries are God's days ; the greatest least  
In his esteem. We have no glass to sweep  
His universe. A hand's-breadth distant dies,  
To our poor ears, the strain whose echoes keep  
All heaven glad. We do but grope and creep.  
There always is a day-star in the skies !

OCTOBER'S BRIGHT BLUE WEATHER.



SUNS and skies and clouds of June,  
And flowers of June together,  
Ye cannot rival for one hour  
October's bright blue weather,

When loud the bumble-bee makes haste,  
Belated, thriftless vagrant,  
And golden-rod is dying fast,  
And lanes with grapes are fragrant ;

When gentians roll their fringes tight  
To save them for the morning,  
And chestnuts fall from satin burrs  
Without a sound of warning ;

When on the ground red apples lie  
In piles like jewels shining,  
And redder still on old stone walls  
Are leaves of woodbine twining ;

When all the lovely wayside things  
Their white-winged seeds are sowing,  
And in the fields, still green and fair,  
Late aftermaths are growing ;

When springs run low, and on the brooks,  
In idle golden freighting,  
Bright leaves sink noiseless in the hush  
Of woods, for winter waiting ;

When comrades seek sweet country haunts,  
By twos and twos together,  
And count like misers hour by hour,  
October's bright blue weather.

O suns and skies and flowers of June,  
Count all your boasts together,  
Love loveth best of all the year  
October's bright blue weather.

## THE RIVIERA.



PEERLESS shore of peerless sea,  
Ere mortal eye had gazed on thee,  
What god was lover first of thine,  
Drank deep of thy unvintaged wine,  
And lying on thy shining breast  
Knew all thy passion and thy rest ;  
And when thy love he must resign,  
O generous god, first love of thine,  
Left such a dower of wealth to thee,  
Thou peerless shore of peerless sea !  
Thy balmy air, thy stintless sun,  
Thy orange-flowering never done,  
Thy myrtle, olive, palm, and pine,  
Thy golden figs, thy ruddy wine,  
Thy subtle and resistless spell  
Which all men feel and none can tell ?  
O peerless shore of peerless sea !  
From all the world we turn to thee ;  
No wonder deem we thee divine !  
Some god was lover first of thine.

## SEMITONES.



H me, the subtle boundary between  
What pleases and what pains ! The dif-  
ference

Between the word that thrills our every sense  
With joy and one which hurts, although it mean  
No hurt ! It is the things that are unseen,  
Invisible, not things of violence,  
For which the mightiest are without defence.  
On kine most fair to see one may grow lean  
With hunger. Many a snowy bread is doled  
Which is far harder than the hardest stones.  
'T is but a narrow line divides the zones  
Where suns are warm from those where suns are  
cold.  
'Twixt harmonies divine as chords can hold  
And torturing discords, lie but semitones !



## IN THE DARK.



As one who journeys on a stormy night  
Through mountain passes which he does  
not know

Shields like his life from savage gusts that blow  
The swaying flame of his frail torch's light,  
So each of us through life's long groping fight  
Clings fast to one dear faith, one love, whose glow  
Makes darkness noonday to our trusting sight,  
And joys of perils into which we go.  
God help us, when this precious shining mark  
The raging storms of deep distrust assail  
With icy, poisoned breath and deadly aim,  
Till we, with hearts that shrink and cower and quail  
In terror which no measure has nor name,  
Stand trembling, helpless, palsied, in the dark.

## MORDECAI.



MAKE friends with him! He is of royal  
line,  
Although he sits in rags. Not all of  
thine

Array of splendor, pomp of high estate,  
Can buy him from his place within the gate,  
The King's Gate of thy happiness, where he,  
Yes, even he, the Jew, remaineth free,  
Never obeisance making, never scorn  
Betraying of thy silver and new-born  
Delight. Make friends with him, for unawares  
The charmèd secret of thy joys he bears ;  
Be glad, so long as his black sackcloth, late  
And early, thwarts thy sun ; for if in hate  
And haste thou plottest for his blood, thy own  
death-cry,  
Not his, comes from the gallows fifty cubits high.



## IN APRIL.



HAT did the sparrow do yesterday?

Nobody knew but the sparrows ;

He were too bold who should try to say ;

They have forgotten it all to-day.

Why does it haunt my thoughts this way,

With a joy that piques and harrows,

As the birds fly past,

And the chimes ring fast,

And the long spring shadows sweet shadow cast?

There's a maple-bud redder to-day ;

It will almost flower to-morrow ;

I could swear 't was only yesterday

In a sheath of snow and ice it lay,

With fierce winds blowing it every way ;

Whose surety had it to borrow,

Till birds should fly past,

And chimes ring fast,


And the long spring shadows sweet shadow cast?

“ Was there ever a day like to-day,  
So clear, so shining, so tender? ”  
The old cry out ; and the children say,  
With a laugh, aside : “ That ’s always the way  
With the old, in spring ; as long as they stay,  
They find in it greater splendor,  
When the birds fly past,  
And the chimes ring fast,  
And the long spring shadows sweet shadow cast ! ”

Then that may be why my thoughts all day —  
I see I am old, by the token —  
Are so haunted by sounds, now sad, now gay,  
Of the words I hear the sparrows say,  
And the maple-bud’s mysterious way  
By which from its sheath it has broken,  
While the birds fly past,  
And the chimes ring fast,  
And the long spring shadows sweet shadow cast !

## TWO HARVESTS.

## I.

 LOSSOM and fruit no man could count or  
hoard ;  
Seasons their laws forgot, in riot haste  
Lavishing yield on yield in madman's waste ;  
No tropic with its centuries' heat outpoured  
In centuries of summers, ever stored  
Such harvest.

Had the earth her sole pearl placed  
In wine of sun to melt, — one blissful taste  
To drain and die, — it had not fully dowered  
This harvest !

She who smiling goes, a queen,  
Reaping with alabaster arms and hands  
The fruits and flowers of these magic lands,  
With idle, satiate intervals between, —  
Oh, what to her do laws of harvest mean ?  
Joy passes by her, where she laden stands !

## II.

A PARCHED and arid land, all colorless,  
Than desert drearier, than rock more stern ;  
Spring could not find, nor any summer learn  
The secret to redeem this wilderness.  
Harsh winds sweep through with icy storm and stress :  
Fierce lurid suns shine but to blight and burn ;  
And streams rise, pallid, but to flee and turn :  
Who soweth here waits miracle to bless  
The harvest !

She who smiling goes, a queen,  
Seeking with hidden tears and tireless hands  
To win a fruitage from these barren lands, —  
She knoweth what the laws of harvest mean !  
Blades spring, flowers bloom, by all but her unseen ;  
Joy's halo crowns her, where she patient stands !

## HABEAS CORPUS.



Y body, eh? Friend Death, how now?  
Why all this tedious pomp of writ?  
Thou hast reclaimed it sure and slow  
For half a century, bit by bit.

In faith thou knowest more to-day  
Than I do, where it can be found !  
This shrivelled lump of suffering clay,  
To which I now am chained and bound,

Has not of kith or kin a trace  
To the good body once I bore ;  
Look at this shrunken, ghastly face :  
Didst ever see that face before ?

Ah, well, friend Death, good friend thou art ;  
Thy only fault thy lagging gait,  
Mistaken pity in thy heart  
For timorous ones that bid thee wait.

Do quickly all thou hast to do,  
Nor I nor mine will hindrance make ;  
I shall be free when thou art through ;  
I grudge thee nought that thou must take !

Stay ! I have lied ; I grudge thee one,  
Yes, two I grudge thee at this last, —  
Two members which have faithful done  
My will and bidding in the past.

I grudge thee this right hand of mine ;  
I grudge thee this quick-beating heart ;  
They never gave me coward sign,  
Nor played me once a traitor's part.

I see now why in olden days  
Men in barbaric love or hate  
Nailed enemies' hands at wild crossways,  
Shrined leaders' hearts in costly state :

The symbol, sign, and instrument  
Of each soul's purpose, passion, strife,  
Of fires in which are poured and spent  
Their all of love, their all of life.

O feeble, mighty human hand !  
O fragile, dauntless human heart !  
The universe holds nothing planned  
With such sublime, transcendent art !



Yes, Death, I own I grudge thee mine  
    Poor little hand, so feeble now ;  
Its wrinkled palm, its altered line,  
    Its veins so pallid and so slow —

. . . (Unfinished here.)

Ah, well, friend Death, good friend thou art ;  
    I shall be free when thou art through.  
Take all there is — take hand and heart ;  
    There must be somewhere work to do.

## A LAST PRAYER.



FATHER, I scarcely dare to pray,  
So clear I see, now it is done,  
That I have wasted half my day,  
And left my work but just begun ;

So clear I see that things I thought  
Were right or harmless were a sin ;  
So clear I see that I have sought,  
Unconscious, selfish aims to win ;

So clear I see that I have hurt  
The souls I might have helped to save ;  
That I have slothful been, inert,  
Deaf to the calls thy leaders gave.

In outskirts of thy kingdoms vast,  
Father, the humblest spot give me ;  
Set me the lowliest task thou hast ;  
Let me repentant work for thee !

THE SONG HE NEVER WROTE.



IS thoughts were song, his life was singing ;  
Men's hearts like harps he held and  
smote,

But in his heart went ever ringing,  
Ringing, the song he never wrote.

Hovering, pausing, luring, fleeting,  
A farther blue, a brighter mote,  
The vanished sound of swift winds meeting,  
The opal swept beneath the boat.

A gleam of wings forever flaming,  
Never folded in nest or cote ;  
Secrets of joy, past name or naming ;  
Measures of bliss past dole or rote ;

Echoes of music, always flying,  
Always echo, never the note ;  
Pulses of life, past life, past dying, —  
All these in the song he never wrote.

Dead at last, and the people, weeping,  
 Turned from his grave with wringing hands, —  
 “What shall we do, now he lies sleeping,  
 His sweet song silent in our lands?

“Just as his voice grew clearer, stronger,” —  
 This was the thought that keenest smote, —  
 “O Death! couldst thou not spare him  
 longer?  
 Alas for the songs he never wrote!”

Free at last, and his soul up-soaring,  
 Planets and skies beneath his feet,  
 Wonder and rapture all out-pouring,  
 Eternity how simple, sweet!

Sorrow slain, and every regretting,  
 Love and Love's labors left the same,  
 Weariness over, suns without setting,  
 Motion like thought on wings of flame:

Higher the singer rose and higher,  
 Heavens, in spaces, sank like bars;  
 Great joy within him glowed like fire,  
 He tossed his arms among the stars, —

“ This is the life, past life, past dying ;  
I am I, and I live the life :  
Shame on the thought of mortal crying !  
Shame on its petty toil and strife !

“ Why did I halt, and weakly tremble ? ”  
Even in heaven the memory smote, —  
“ Fool to be dumb, and to dissemble !  
Alas for the song I never wrote ! ”







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